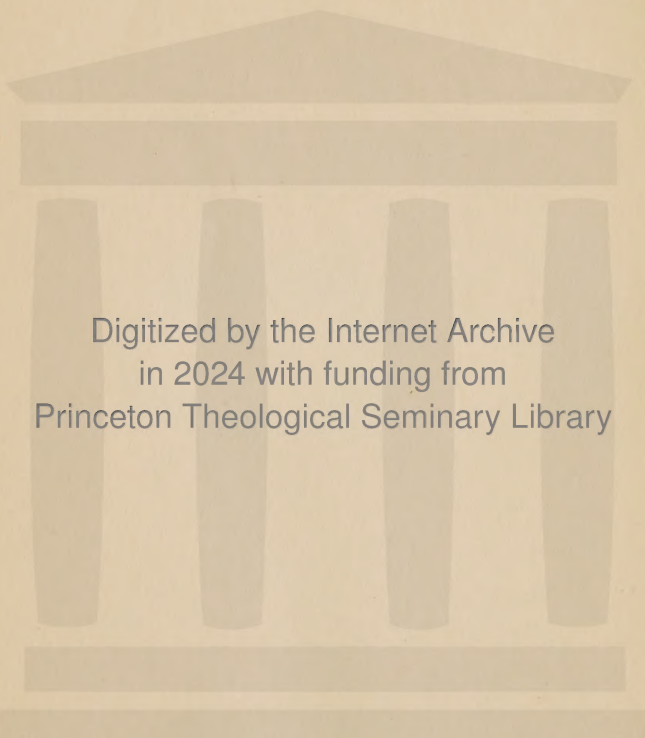


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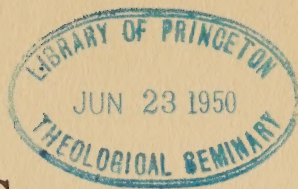
THE INDWELLING CHRIST

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

by

THE VERY REVEREND GEO. C. PIDGEON, D.D.

NEW YORK
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1949



First published 1948
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by CLARKE, IRWIN & COMPANY LIMITED
TORONTO

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS INC.
114 5TH AVE., NEW YORK

Printed in Canada

TO HELEN I

AND

HELEN II

TO THE FIRST WITH GRATITUDE UNBOUNDED
AND TO THE SECOND WITH HIGH EXPECTANCY.

FOREWORD

I HAVE been trying in these closing months of my active ministry to give the essence of the Gospel I have preached through the years. Its centre has been the living Christ. What I have asked young Christians to confess as they became members of the Church in full communion I have tried to set forth in these expositions,—the experience of Christ as Saviour and obedience to Him as Lord. This turned me to St. Paul, the greatest exponent of Christianity according to Christ, supreme in both experience and achievement. I have given the chief place to studies of some of his “escapes”, or flights of insight and inspiration, in which he breaks away from his arguments and practical objects, and soars into the regions of ultimate truth. I have treated these as Poems of the Christian Experience. The first four studies are an introduction to the main theme of the book.

These are sermons rather than close knit studies, and always have the preacher’s practical object in view. I hope that in their printed form they will continue to serve these ends.

GEO. C. PIDGEON

*Toronto,
December 1st, 1948.*

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THE INDWELLING CHRIST

I

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

GALATIANS 2:20

WHAT DOES religion mean? The contact and communion of the human spirit with its divine author. The kinship of the human with the divine is a truth made clear from the dawn of revelation. In the story of creation we read: "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He man." At this point a new element creeps into creation's story. God formed man's body out of the dust of the ground just as he had created the heavens and the earth out of nothing, and in addition God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. We are more than God's handiwork; God imparted something of Himself to men; we are His children in that we share His nature.

If kinship, then communion—communication both ways, each indispensable to the other. A scientist once described his investigations as "thinking God's thoughts after Him"; the minds of men find law and order in the universe and every experiment they conduct is based on the assumption that those laws are inviolable; religion affirms that the mind from which all law and order proceed, seeks fellowship with minds which can understand Him. In that fellowship of the human with the divine spiritual religion consists.

If I am to speak to you of the indwelling Christ you have a right to ask me what I have found out for myself about these claims made by spiritually minded people. Some of you know that all life was changed for me one day when in weariness approaching exhaustion my eye fell on these words: "That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith." I saw in that moment that I did not have to cry to the heavens above or call to the earth beneath for help from an absent Deity, but that He was in my heart, "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet," and ready to live out His life in me and through me. But before that came I had varied experiences of God. In all his attempts to describe these moods and fortunes of the soul an older person views them in their outcome and can testify whether the impulse which seemed divine proved to be so by its results.

I grew up in the realization of a presence all-pervading, one to whom the secrets of the soul were an open book, and in whose hands lay our destinies. I cannot remember the time when I could not have made my own Wordsworth's sense of the unseen: "And I have felt a presence which disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts." "A presence that disturbed" because of His claim to an obedience which one could not fully render. Persons privileged to know of their acceptance with Him were to me most to be envied. Then He came to me, I don't know how or why, and He brought with Him joy unspeakable and full of glory. Life was not always on a high plane; reaction followed ecstasy and the valley succeeded the hill top with troublesome monotony; yet I found that He could conquer in me when I could not subdue the

forces of my own nature to higher ends, and whatever I committed to Him He could keep against that day.

If one is conscious of a divine call and has answered it with the commitment of his life, it is reasonable to expect that the will which claimed the life would make itself felt in the particulars of daily living. Personally I could never escape the consciousness that the will of God who had called me bore directly on everything I had to decide. As between right and wrong that will was unbending, but it governed more than moral issues; God had a choice for me in every alternative I faced. Sometimes His hand was laid on my soul restraining me from things I wanted to have or to do, and when the things I wanted were not wrong in themselves, and when I saw others blessed with them, it was hard to understand why they should be denied to me. Yet whenever I resisted that pressure and went my own way regardless, it always resulted in loss, disappointment and sorrow. On the other hand, prompt obedience was always the condition of continued communications of God's will.

On the positive side it was often laid upon me that I ought to do certain things, and from this sense of obligation to a will higher than my own, I could not escape. Often it was difficult; sometimes dangerous: but spiritual experience could have had no reality for me if these convictions were not the will of God. Perhaps it was a message I felt constrained to deliver; at other times an opportunity I was required to accept, or refuse, whether I wanted it or not; but it became clear that God had chosen for me in the matter and to refuse obedience was to break with Him. Repeatedly

in life's choices the will of God for me went against the judgment of my best friends; life's main decisions each of us must reach for himself in union with Christ, and in that deeper relationship Christ and the soul are alone. On occasion the communications of that will came in a flash, clear as light and as unmistakable, and, no matter what the cost, the path thus illumined had to be followed. When the decision could be viewed in its outcome, it was obvious that in following what was for me the divine direction I was being loyal to the best in myself.

I can still recall my surprise on receiving in answer to prayer an assurance in advance that the request would be granted. On one never-to-be-forgotten walk alone under the stars the thing I desired most intensely seemed beyond the bound of possibility, but against the facts there came the assurance: "Delight thyself also in the Lord and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart." In such a case the fact is doubly precious because of the faith that prepared for it. When the gifts requested were contrary to the will of the Father, one felt the pleas denied by One who in the denials was serving one's highest good.

As a pastor I have seen frequently peace direct from God calm the most tumultuous grief. A bereaved mother once said to me, "The blow was so sudden and so contrary to everything I had expected from God, that in my desperation I felt that reason was being dethroned, and in answer to my cry for help there broke into my soul a peace which no human language can describe and with it a strange awareness that love was in command." This happens so often that one

can offer it confidently to every stricken soul. It illustrates and brings down to date Paul's experience: "As the afflictions of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ."

There is an endowment which I still expect in richer fulness than I have yet known—the Holy Spirit's action following up and using the Gospel to quicken the dead in sin with life divine.

Religion for me means life in conscious union with God and obedience to His will. As the fish lives in the water and the bird in the air, so the spiritual man lives in Christ as the divine element to which his soul belongs.

All this is of value only in so far as it introduces us to Paul's experiences and experiments with Christ. Paul sums them up in the phrase "in Christ." One writer says that he uses this phrase, or its equivalents one hundred and sixty-four times, and calls it "the characteristic expression for the profoundest spiritual fellowship conceivable between the Christian and the living Christ." After Damascus religion meant for Paul, "the immediate and unassailable reality of his personal relation to Christ." This relationship rested on Christ's will. It was intimate, penetrating to the secrets of his being. It was passionate, for at every stage he could say, "The love of Christ constrains me."

When Jesus entered Paul's life He came to stay. Paul saw in that blinding light that Jesus was alive, and stood before him a radiant personality, warm with love and interest in His persecutor. Paul knew that He had been crucified; now it was clear that He had broken the bars of death and stood before Paul as

Lord, clothed with authority, forgiving, commanding, commissioning and equipping the one He called for a key position in the vast design of which Christ Himself was the centre. Paul's reaction, given on the spot and confirmed through the years, is found in our text.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

That is to say, the old self dies on Christ's Cross; henceforward life is a partnership, with Christ as senior partner and in full control. The faith with which Paul answered it was "an utter and entire committal of himself to God in Christ, following an overmastering impulse of the will to respond with love to the love of God which had been manifested in Christ."

Christ took charge of Paul's movements. He made Paul and Barnabas launch out on the greatest adventure of all time, the first foreign missionary crusade. Sometimes He forbade Paul to enter attractive openings, as when the Spirit prevented him from preaching in Bithynia and Asia; sometimes He led him to places which he would never have thought of visiting, as when He called him into Macedonia to begin the evangelization of Europe and the western world. Wherever Paul went in obedience to such a summons, it was in the consciousness of a divine purpose being wrought out through him. As he stood before the people in Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth, places to which he had been brought by the will of God, he felt

that he was the instrument of a divine decree and that God had individuals there ready to enter into His plans and that He would call them through Paul's message. God always did, as the records show. When we read the accounts of his converts in every mission which he conducted, we shall see that God not only had endowed His servants with the gifts of the Spirit, but that the Spirit of God worked through His servant to save His chosen.

Christ was with Paul in his prayer life. Romans 8:26-27 shows that, when Paul's praying reached its heights, he found the Spirit of Christ praying through him toward the fulfilment of God's will in His people. This was particularly so in his sufferings. One would think that the all-powerful Lord of Life could and would protect His servant against his enemies. He did in a certain sense; Paul was immortal until his work was done; yet in doing that work he was called to share Christ's sufferings. All through the New Testament, acceptance of Christ carried with it the acceptance of suffering, because the new spirit which Christ imparts will surely clash with the influences of the world and the Christian must be ready to endure to the end the worst that the world can do.

Life in the natural world has developed along two different lines. Some species have the hard substances as a protecting shell covering the sensitive vital organs against enemies and against too rough contacts with its world. The other type has the sensitive parts of the body exposed, with the hard bones on the inside to support them. The types that have evolved the highest are in all cases those whose flesh is exposed to every object and influence that can act on them. Whatever

mother nature's designs, she obviously never intended her favourites to be exempt from pain.

The same law rules in the spiritual order. Christ never guarantees His servants against pain. He does guarantee His presence with them in their pain. Paul, surrounded by fanatical hatred and riot in Corinth, finds Jesus by his side in the night, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Again, humbled to the dust after his arrest by the contrast between the hot invective with which he had met a wanton insult and the calm dignity with which Christ had protested against a blow in the face, Christ came to him with comforting assurance: "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Tossed with the tempest, the same Lord came to him as his ship was breaking up with the violence of the storm, and said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God has given thee all them that are with thee." Even when Paul's prayer had to be denied, Christ accompanied the denial with the message that the lower good was withheld in order that thereby a higher good, otherwise impossible, might be given. (II Corinthians 12:7-10)

No human mind can clear up the mystery of pain, but this Christ does teach by example and precept: unmerited suffering is not purposeless, and it is an opportunity. By bearing it in Christ's spirit you testify to His grace more powerfully than can the king on his throne or the conqueror in the hour of victory. Christ is with you in it, and He will make your ordeal His

agency for revealing to others the wonders that He can do for them.

Paul in Christ; Christ in Paul—there is the secret behind it all. Sometimes his contact with the Risen Lord rises into rapture indescribable, as in the experience recorded in II Corinthians 12:2: "I knew a man in Christ, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, who was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." At the same time such union with Christ need be no transient splendour, flashing for a moment across life's greyness and then gone; it was with him, and it can be with us, the steady radiance of a light unsetting, filling the commonest ways of earth with a gladness which is new every morning. Maltbie Babcock put it this way:

No distant Lord have I,
Loving afar to be;
Made flesh for me, He cannot rest
Until He rests in me.

Brother in joy and pain,
Bone of my bone was He;
Now,—intimacy closer still,
He dwells Himself in me.

I need not journey far
This dearest friend to see,
Companionship is always mine;
He makes His home with me.

I envy not the Twelve,
Nearer to me is He;
The life He once lived here on earth,
He lives again in me.

Ascended now to God
My witness there to be,
His witness here am I, because
His Spirit dwells in me.

O glorious Son of God,
Incarnate Deity,
I shall forever be with Thee
Because Thou art with me.¹

Yours is a predestined life. A divine purpose called you into being with the intention of fitting you into His vast design. The issue now to be decided, and it must be decided by each for himself, is your attitude toward the mind and heart behind your existence. God's will cannot be frustrated in its ultimate objects although it may be blocked by human perversity in this direction or that, for where He does not rule He overrules.

There are three human reactions to the divine intent which I may mention.

There is the word to Pharaoh of the Exodus spoken through Moses and quoted by Paul: "For this cause have I raised thee up, to show in thee My power and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Exodus 9:16 Romans 9:17) Pharaoh refused to cooperate. He could not keep Israel in bondage, but his revolt was a tragic illustration of a prophetic word spoken long afterwards: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." This story has been told: Before the Nazi occupation there was a Bible in every prison cell in Norway, but, when the Nazis took over,

¹ Rev. Maltbie Babcock, *No Distant Lord*. By permission.

these Bibles were thrown out of the cells and then swept out of the corridors with a broom. It seemed an easy thing for a conqueror to do, but the action was symbolic. The Word of God stood notwithstanding, and will stand against similar rebelliousness now and forever.

The other two reactions to the divine intent are found in Psalm 32:8-9:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:

I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding;

Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in,

Else they will not come near unto thee.

God does not want to pull you here and push you there by the hard pressure of circumstances; He wants to guide you heart to heart. In the deepest perplexity the Father will make His will clear if you are willing to obey.

Some of you are about to make life's great choices: one who looks at those choices in the light of their outcome would like to remind you of the finality of youth's decision. You are entering new relationships; you are at the parting of the ways; one of the courses open before you must be taken. Your temptation is to think that you can try this and experiment with that, and still be as you were if it does not work. Whatever else may be possible for you, this is impossible. Every such decision fixes something; it closes one door when

it opens another. By every experiment with life something is done in your own soul which can never be undone. Your choices, therefore, will be sources of unbounded satisfaction or infinite regret.

Can you not recognize, you the elect of God, that He has already chosen for you and that your first task is to find His will? You may feel it impossible to discover God's will for you in perplexing situations, but take time; your Father will not fail you.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain.

Or you may be restive under God's control, and feel that in this pursuit, or in that relationship, your own inclinations should prevail. I plead with you, do not resist the divine will. If you feel it upon you it means that God is waiting to work out your character and career with you. In your Father's heart is gladness for you. "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart."¹ There is no joy in life like that to be found in the unclouded sense of Christ's companionship in the place which He has raised you up to fill.

But more, the world is awaiting for God's new word for the strange new times in which we live. In a most striking article in the *International Review of Missions* the new Editor, Norman Goodall, reminds his readers that if in this wholly new era the World Church is to

¹ Psalm 97:11.

act and speak in a manner commensurate with its epoch-making character and the majesty of the Gospel, a more dynamic word than has yet been given must be vouchsafed us. He reviews the efforts made by the different Councils that have met this year to speak that word, and concludes that the "decisive, dynamic, emancipating word which might rally the Church and save the world from destruction has not been vouchsafed through them." Our hunger for this divine word is "sharpened by the conviction that God is the kind of God who has this word to say."

There are two ideals of inspiration. One is that the knowledge which the human mind can acquire is just irrelevant; the inspiration that quickens must come direct from God to the spirit who waits for Him. Such people hold that the prophet does not need learning and that it can only block the channels of his soul. It was that idea which led the Mohammedans to destroy the famous Alexandrian library. They said: If it is in the Koran, it is unnecessary; if it is not in the Koran, it is error: assign it all to the flames.

The other idea is this: accept the rich treasures of the past and make them your own; then you will understand the need of the present and thereby be qualified to fit God's Word into it. It was out of the fulness of their knowledge of their times that Isaiah and Jeremiah spoke; in sheer statesmanship none of their contemporaries approached them; with the conditions and needs of the hour before their minds they caught sight of God's will for people in those particular circumstances. So it must be with us. It is more knowledge that we need, not less, and knowledge more widely diffused. All should pray Tennyson's prayer:

Let knowledge grow from more to more
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul according well
May make one music as before,
But vaster.

But the music must reach our ears through souls attuned to the divine. Will you be one of those who anticipate eagerly God's word for our times and so prepare your soul to receive it? You say, "Do you expect God to speak that word through me?" Why not? You have a capacity for it which your fathers lacked because yours is a wider world, and, as Dr. Mott said recently, ours is a larger Christ. Whoever the individual may be who speaks this word, it will be out of a generation of people who seek the Lord. The one who utters it will gather up and voice what his people have found in the mind and heart of Christ. His originality will consist in gathering up and interpreting the common soul, the spirit of his times. For God is among us of a truth. Bring God into your personal problems, and you prepare the way for Him to bring order out of the chaos of your age.

II

THE HUMAN BASIS OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

PHILIPPIANS 3:4-7

A LONDON lad was talking to his mother about his late father's drinking habits, and the ill treatment which she had often had to suffer at his hands. She answered in her inimitable Cockney dialect, "Ah! but your father was a man." What was her idea of manliness? It was the spirit which asserted itself against the world and in the man's own little world refused to be subdued. What she had had to endure was only one phase of his resolute temper, and, in spite of it, she admired the person who would not be downed by anyone or anything.

She was neither the first nor the last to wrestle with the problem of manhood. Shakespeare put into Mark Antony's mouth this tribute to Brutus after the death of his noble opponent:

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

The significant thing is that this tribute comes from Mark Antony. Literary men never weary of praising the skill and power of his address over Caesar's body, but he got his opportunity by the hypocrisy which he

considered strategy. Repeatedly he called Caesar's murderers "honourable men" in order to conciliate the crowd which he planned to turn against them, but the moment he was alone he burst out:

O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!

That is Antony all the way through. Over against him stands Brutus, an orator of complete sincerity and consuming earnestness, who pleads for the rule of the people by the people and for the people, a burning issue in every real democracy today. Yet Antony himself, so devoid of the quality which he admired in Brutus, could nevertheless honour it as the essence of manhood.

Robert Burns' song of the people, "A man's a man for a' that" has a similar conception of manhood. Such lines as these inspire us still:

The rank is but the guinea-stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that.

The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king of men for a' that.

Their author called these verses two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme, but those who aspire to world brotherhood will still sing it to the end of time.

In between these two in thought as well as in date is Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*. He takes into account both sides of man's nature, for example, in the introduction to epistle II:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
 The proper study of Mankind is Man.
 Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A Being darkly wise, and rudely great:
 With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
 With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
 In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
 In doubt His Mind or Body to prefer;
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
 Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confus'd;
 Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall;
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd:
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

This strange contrast is illustrated in later literature. On the one side we have Robert Browning's poem, *Gold Hair, a Story of Pornic*, a picture of a young girl, so beautiful that she charmed every beholder and so ethereal in appearance that it seemed as if a breeze would blow her into the spirit-world, and yet weighed down to the earth by love of gold for its own sake, the untarnishable metal which tarnished her eternity. On the other side we have Charles Dickens' Sidney Carton, too weak to govern his own appetites in his own interests, and yet in a crisis capable of noble self-sacrifice for the sake of the one whom he loved but could never claim.

I am bringing this quest for full manhood before you with a definite practical aim. Answer to your own soul this question; what kind of a man do you want

to be? Or, to go back of all this; what direction does your ambition take? As you look toward the future, is your concern about the position you are to get or the kind of person you are to become? The position is important because it spells opportunity, but unless you can make the position totally different from what it was when you took it, its greatness will only be the measure of your failure. What you are will determine how the position is to be filled.

So I invite you to a study of the apostle Paul before Christ came into his life, the man as he left the hand of nature before he was perfected by nature's God. In this way we can see the kind of material Christ had to work with and has to work with still.

Paul's was a tempestuous nature. He believed so strongly that he was always antagonizing those who could not see things as he saw them, or awakening loyalties equally uncompromising in his converts. One moment he would be tender as a nursing mother, the next furious in denunciation. He had a capacity for indignation which made him a terror to his adversaries, but it was his devotion to the cause which the errors and actions of his opponents threatened that made him so fierce in battle. For him to believe anything was to take steps to put it into effect; faith always drove him into action. He was a combination of physical energy and moral courage with a desire for affection and confidence which made him the driving force in every cause which he adopted, and then the human centre of every group which he lifted into union with Christ. He had the restless intellect which was always digging into the meaning of things and

seeing farther than others into their implications, and yet the man was so much greater than his ideas that he could never throw his whole soul into any policy; there was always an overplus, and the overplus was the real man. He was a religious genius, one of those rare spirits which could not live without God, and yet his human nature persisted in asserting itself against his own beliefs and longings and also against the revealed will of the God who meant everything to him; in fact, God's commands only provoked the old Adam in him to more active resistance. As a result, he comes before us a nature torn by civil war so that he could never reach satisfaction or peace. There never were any half measures for this ardent soul; the cause of his God commanded all his energies: yet there was that in him which the law of that God could not subdue. Christ's first appeal to him was based on the war he was waging at that moment against his better self.

Just a glance at this man's world and what he brought into it. It was a much smaller world than ours, but it was one world. Roman legions had brought all its tribes and nations into subjection. Roman roads were built into every province of the empire and her ships were on every sea. Roman law was enforced in every land that he visited, and while there were self-seeking representatives of Rome in the high positions of many a province, nevertheless this free-born citizen of the empire could and did claim the protection of those laws. The Greek language provided an avenue for his message to all people. Rome ruled by force and suppressed rebellion with cruelty, and yet Paul took advantage of all that her civilization provided.

Into this world came this individual with his full Hebrew heritage. There was one God over all the world to whom all must answer for their deeds. He was a just God who could be counted on to do the right and to enforce the right. The emperor on the throne no less than the slave or the prisoner was accountable to God. This God had chosen a people for His own possession of whom Paul was one, and He required in them a righteousness corresponding to His own. The Pharisee, their strictest sect, aimed to be as pure every day as the priests had to be in the Temple, and Paul outstripped all rivals in the race to this goal. To attain, or achieve, a righteousness on which God could look with approval was the passion of his soul, and it was his failure in this effort which burned like a hot iron in his conscience. It was to excel in this struggle that he persecuted the Nazarenes, because he thought their teachings were hateful to the God whom he served, and he was in the heat of this persecution when Jesus, the Glorified, revealed the true nature of the God of love and brought him to his knees.

Everyone knows what this pride of race means. Wordsworth wrote, as Britain held the line against Napoleon, "in everything we are sprung of earth's first blood", and he is a poor Briton who does not thrill with pride at what his race has accomplished in these later days.

In our vestry there is a picture by Rubens of Paul's conversion. Rubens was the painter of perfect physical manhood, and there we find Paul portrayed as a man of great bodily strength. Deissmann says that "as a mere physical performance his life-work challenges our

admiration." This writer travelled over the course of Paul's journeys in a modern railway carriage, with every provision for his comfort made in advance, and he found it a trying journey even under those conditions. As the train moved through the rocky defiles in Asia Minor he could see the ancient track, narrow and rocky, winding up and down the mountain sides, with here and there a traveller on foot or riding on a donkey, and he thought of Paul walking from town to town with his message of salvation along these roads. Streams were not bridged in many regions, but no river in flood could hold him back. Anyone who read years ago Helen Stone's account of her capture by bandits and experiences as they held her for ransom will know how ruthless these outlaws are, and Paul, the unarmed, was exposed to their attacks on many of his journeys. Yet he went on. His own countrymen detested him as a renegade, and were only too eager to carry out Philo's plea to hunt to death apostates from their holy faith. The "forty stripes save one" authorized by Jewish law, with the instruction to the officer to scourge with all his strength, were inflicted five times on Paul. It is said that when a modern criminal is once given the lash his pals feel that he can never be trusted fully again; under the Jewish punishment the sufferer often died, but in spite of the threat of such treatment round every corner, Paul went on. Three times he was beaten with rods by the Roman authorities; three times this landsman was shipwrecked in addition to the one described in Acts 27, and after one of them he drifted on some wreckage for a day and a night on the open sea, yet he kept on, ready to travel by land or sea as the occasion required. In addition to all these, there

were hunger and thirst, frost and heat, the danger of disease as he journeyed without any accommodation as we understand it, from land to land. Nothing ever turned him aside. Under such conditions western Christianity was started on its course. Do we realize what our privileges in Christ cost?

Bodily strength is an asset still. I do not want to meet the man who was not thrilled by the account of Barbara Ann Scott's triumph, but also, as a lad in school, I sat next to the boy who was afterwards to take and hold the record for the Chilcoat Pass in the days of the Klondyke Gold Rush, and I am proud of him too. Our soldiers had inventiveness and daring of a kind peculiar to themselves, but it was their physical endurance which carried them through the long grind to victory. You may have brilliance of intellect and invincible faith, but without the bodily endowments which enabled our missionaries to reach remote tribes and face all sorts of opposition, your other qualities would be vain. And all that our favoured generation has been able to do was surpassed in sheer physical courage and endurance by the greatest human who ever followed the divine Lord.

When we turn to this man's mental endowments we find features equally surprising. He was bilingual; he had learned to speak freely and to think in another language than his own. Last year I heard a British statesman address a public gathering in perfect English, but afterward he told me that in the family circle the conversation was always in Welsh. When Paul gloried in being a Hebrew of the Hebrews he meant that in the intimacies of his family the language used was Hebrew,

even though they lived in an alien land. But Paul's Bible was the Greek version of the Old Testament, and it is from it that he quotes. The Greek used was the language of the common people and not the classical speech of ancient Greece. He made it the vehicle of Christianity's noble conceptions of God and man and salvation. The Scottish dialect was considered by the literary impoverished English until Robert Burns used it in his soul-stirring lyrics. Then it was found that it contained terms of endearment, expressions of loyalty and devotion, and a language of beauty that our tongue sorely lacks. So Paul took a dialect of the common people, and with a touch of genius, made it a medium for the defence and expositions of truth and righteousness, for praise and prayer and all the moods of the soul.

Nothing is more difficult than to break away from the influence of childhood. I have known men who boasted of their emancipation from everything that their parents had laid upon them, and yet the spirit of their family determined their approach to their new learning and the way in which they used it. Paul was like the rest of us in this. I have heard men speak of a de-Rabbinized Paul, but you could not have a de-Rabbinized Paul, even if you wanted to. The thought-forms of his old religion he used in both argument and expositions. Now, we would not use Scripture as Paul did, for example, in Galatians 3 and 4. But although we argue differently, yet the truth brought out by his argument is clear to us as the sun. Then when in passages like Romans 8 and I Corinthians 13 and 15, he breaks away from all his inherited ideas and soars into the region of ultimate truth, we find in him a free-

dom of soul and an exaltation of spirit that have never been equalled among his spiritual children.

We have spoken of his restless intellect; nothing is more characteristic of him than his insight into the truth involved in the positions men took, often not realizing what they were doing. When Stephen taught that worship was spiritual and that through Christ men had access to God, Paul took the position that this meant the abrogating of the special privileges of the Jew, and to maintain them he persecuted Stephen and his comrades to death. When Peter left the table of Gentile Christians in Antioch out of deference to the prejudices of Jerusalem Jews, Paul insisted that by this action he repudiated the Christian way of salvation through faith in Christ alone. From the first he felt that God, as Jesus understood Him, could not limit His love to any particular race, and so the moment that he beheld Jesus of Nazareth glorified, he recognized universal love on the throne and accepted Jesus' commission to carry His Gospel to the Gentiles. We owe the expansion of Christianity then and now to the daring with which he took and held that position. A mind creative rather than consistent. Christians still reach the highest levels of experience and the most effective forms of evangelism by moving along the trails which he blazed through the prejudices and perplexities of the men in his time, including the original apostles of Christ Himself.

We can never understand Paul by studying his mind alone; the man was greater than any of his powers. He could never proceed along normal lines. Steady, consistent development was not for him. A

series of crises marked his moral and spiritual progress. The forces of his nature, suppressed for the moment by the determination with which he pressed toward his objective, gathered to the breaking point, and then there came a volcanic upheaval which changed the face of his world.

The reason was that the soul of the man was always too big for his programme. To give effect to an ideal requires a policy, and to make a policy successful one must concentrate on a particular line of action in its support. When a man of Paul's size thus specialized and turned the tremendous forces of his nature into a particular enterprise, it meant that large areas of his thought and interest were for the time left in abeyance. There is always another side to a question, but for Paul in action there never was any other side. He had an object to reach on which the welfare of the world depended, and he could consider nothing else until he succeeded. All the while subconsciously the elements in his nature which were in revolt were slowly gathering force, and sooner or later they burst through the resolution which suppressed them and took possession of the throne.

For example, for a Pharisee to know God's will was to do it. For a time this eager young Pharisee studied the law and as he learned its requirements he translated them into action. There was God's will; he obeyed it; righteousness and acceptance with God could not but be the result. But one day the full significance of the Tenth Commandment broke on his mind: You shall not covet. Why this, he saw in a flash, forbids the evil desire. Outwardly I have kept every Commandment but inwardly I have broken them all

for I have cherished the longing to do the thing I would not let myself do. Here the inwardness of the law was discovered by this man for himself and it showed that it is the state of the heart which counts with God. Paul felt condemned and the hopelessness of the struggle broke his heart. What is the use of trying? He asked himself, and the sense of failure intensified the evil desire. The struggle continued until it became a tragic failure, and it was undoubtedly this sense of failure which gave edge to his persecution.

Again, all that Israel prized seemed to be menaced by Christianity. Saul's keen mind discerned the truth that personal access to God, promised to every soul in Christ, made the particular rites of the Jewish faith unnecessary and opened to all the world the door into God's favour. To defend the exclusive privileges of his people he launched the persecution to which we have referred and conducted it with the utmost severity. He says that beyond measure he wasted the Church, using the figure of hogs in a vineyard rooting up and tramping down everything of value. But his resolute suppression of the humane and the spiritual could not prevent the fermentation from proceeding under the surface. Stephen, in the agonies of death, had received a vision of God and a satisfaction of soul which Saul would give the world to gain. He could not but ask: Is it possible that there is reality in what this young man saw and felt? Was there not something to be said for a religion that was spiritual, and because spiritual, universal? Then when, after the days of quiet thought on the journey to Damascus, the appearance of the glorified Jesus was as the spark to the gas in the cylinder, and the explosion shattered into ten thousand

fragments the iron-clad Judaism in which he had encased his soul. It was the best in him, so long suppressed, that had found its element in Christ, and that better nature now assumed control.

For Paul to know and love Christ was to preach Him, and the convert became the evangelist. Again with whole-souled devotion he pursued his task. He found in the heart of the Gentile a response as genuine as in his own, and the moral and spiritual changes which followed faith in Christ were identical with those in Judea. Then believing Jews tried to fasten the yoke of their law on the necks of Gentile believers. With the swift insight which characterized him, Paul saw that the spirituality and universality of Christianity were at stake, and he leaped again to the conflict, striving with all his mind to make the directness of the soul's dealings with God in Christ the corner-stone of Christianity. He forced matters to an issue and constrained the leaders of the Church to take a stand, and when the irreconcilables carried the war into Galatia, he fought them with a vigour that drove them from the field. In this way he wrote on the heart of the Church as with an iron pen the truth that salvation by faith alone is the Gospel of Christ to a lost world.

Surely, we imagine, here is Paul at his greatest. No, Paul in controversy is never truly and entirely himself. His conflict was strategic but the truth he vindicated was not the whole truth. Further, the heat of the conflict over Gentile rites could give no adequate expression to the heart which was big enough to take in Jewish and Gentile Christianity, and which could rest with nothing short of a Church in which all the

believing world found unity in Christ. Right after his victory Paul awakened to the fact that his fight for Gentile rights had intensified the antagonism between Jewish and Gentile believers almost to the breaking point, and immediately he set himself to heal the wound thus made in the body of Christ. So he gave himself to the collection from the Gentile Churches for the Jerusalem poor which made the communion of the first believers world-wide; he risked everything to take this peace-offering to Jerusalem in person; and he expressed his whole ideal for the Church in the Epistle to the Ephesians, written during the imprisonment to which that effort brought him. So high is the vision that after two thousand years we are still climbing toward its realization.

Can we see the man in Christ eager, impatient with all ordinary means and measures, ready to fly where others crept, and ever aspiring toward heights which ordinary men considered unattainable. No ordinary progress for him; he rises in flights from stage to stage in his progress toward the fulfilment of the whole will of God. If ever God was in a human life He was here.

What about an integrated personality? This story has its bearing not on the case of the immoral man but on that of the man of good intentions and good parts, whose life lacks a centre and an organizing principle, and who feels no purpose behind his life and sees no goal before it. He may have his temptations, as Paul had, and as frequently fall before them, but he never concedes them the mastery, and if he falls, it is only to rise and fight again. He is like the followers of James II who said to the victors after the battle of the Boyne,

"Change commanders with us and we'll fight you again." What such a person longs for is a captain with the secret of victory.

Look at Paul in his unregenerate youth, with his rich legacy from his people's past, his learning and mental gifts, and his fiery energy, yet all he can do is hate and kill. He cannot even govern himself. Yet see what Christ made of him and did with him!

Do not let us forget, however, that even before Christ took command of Paul's soul, self-interest had no place in it. His question never was: What am I to get? It always was: What can I do? Luther, Wesley, the spiritual giants of the nineteenth century and many others, were equally free from selfishness before they discovered the great secret. Christ can inspire unselfishness where it never was before, as He did with Matthew the publican and Francis of Assisi, but the significant thing is that for the epoch-making movements of the Spirit He selected leaders already self-dedicated to the service of the best they knew. Then He met their needs by a communication of Himself and turned their energies to the ministry of love.

This applies to ordinary people as well as to the Church's leaders. The mother who claims for her children the best she knows and counts no toil drudgery which serves that end, the father who gives up the things he wants in order to give his children the start in their career that he wanted for himself but could not get are servants of Christ on the same level as the heroes of the faith, and feed the springs of His power. Do you or do you not often feel that your life lacks meaning, that there is nothing to unify it, that your appetites pull this way and your aspirations that way,

and now one prevails and again the other? If so, you are unable to give yourself unreservedly to any particular object or ideal; probably you do not even know where to invest your life for enduring returns. Christ meets these needs. He will give you, as He gave Paul, a story to tell, an experience worth sharing, a cause worthy of self-investment, and companionship in the noblest enterprise open to men.

III

ST. PAUL'S SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION

II CORINTHIANS 4:6

"IN THE BEGINNING God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light': and there was light." Paul goes right back to that story to illustrate what Christ's incoming meant to him.

There are five accounts of Paul's conversion in the New Testament if we include this text as one. The outer setting and the inner illumination are set forth in various ways. But whatever view we take of it, we find it one of the most wonderful stories in the language of men, wonderful in the divine revelation it contains and still more wonderful in its divine out-working in the history of the nations.

There is only one other story which I would put beside it; God's approach to Moses in the Burning Bush. The Old Testament story begins with a man mighty in intellect and lofty in soul tending a flock of sheep, a patriot without a people, a genius without a medium of expression, a born leader without anyone to lead, a mind stored with the laws of antiquity and no one near him to whom they could apply. God

lifted him into a situation where he had to build the stage for a career out of the most unpromising materials imaginable, a herd of slaves, and the result is the Old Testament, or, properly, the old Covenant, for that is what Old Testament means. Just look where the term points; the Covenant with Abraham to be renewed, the Covenant of Sinai to be drawn up and sealed, the new Covenant of Jeremiah 31 where the old Covenant failed, and Christ's words in the shadow of Calvary as He handed the Chalice to His disciples: "This cup is the new Covenant in my blood."

In the New Testament story the sharp-eyed thinker of the period has chosen for his spiritual environment the black darkness of hate, and is bent on deepening that darkness with every victim he can torture and kill. Christ broke into that darkness at its deepest with a light brighter than the sun, blinding for a moment the only one who saw it in its full splendour in order that he might live in light forever. The result was an immediate reversal of the man's conceptions of God, man and destiny, the acceptance of a commission which embraced all mankind and which carried with it the means for its fulfilment, and then the most adventurous career in missionary history, kindling in every land he touched a light shining more and more unto the perfect day. It began in the manner described in our text: God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts.

You will note that while the accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts, Paul's own accounts as well as Luke's, describe the light which shone around Paul

and his companions, the references to it in Paul's writings stress both the outer and the inner illumination. In I Corinthians 9:1 he bases his apostleship on the fact that he had seen Jesus Christ our Lord. When discussing the resurrection in I Corinthians 15 he closes his enumeration of the appearances of the Risen Christ with this: "Last of all He was seen of me also as of one born out of due time." Another side of what it meant to him is shown us in Galatians 1:15-16: "When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me." Then there is the statement of our text.

John writes: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." This conception of God as light finds an expression almost prostrating in Isaiah's account of his call in chapter 6 of his prophecy. There the impression of God as light unapproachable and unbearable is conveyed through its effects; Isaiah does not attempt to describe the glory in itself in which God was found, but shows us the heavenly beings around the throne not daring to lift their eyes to that central orb but veiling their faces as they adore. Poets in every age since have ransacked their resources for terms to convey this impression of God, usually in vain. Dante's language breaks down under him as he tries to describe the ineffable. Edmund Spenser in his *Hymn to Heavenly Beauty* calls attention to the brightest light known to classic story, and adds that this immortal light which shines from the presence of God is many thousand times more bright, more clear, more excellent, more glorious, more divine, because it proceeds from eternal truth. Then he adds:

With the great glory of that wondrous light
His throne is all encompassed around,
And hid in his own brightness from the sight
Of all that look thereon with eyes unsound;
And underneath His feet are to be found
Thunder, and lightning, and tempestuous fire,
The instruments of His avenging ire.

Spenser's idea is two-sided: the white light of God's presence blinds because it dazzles; the sight which discerns the light is paralyzed by its brilliance; but the light which illuminates faith turns to lightning for the disobedient, and a consuming fire for those confirmed in sin.

Milton tries to improve on Spenser's version, but tries so hard that the result is laboured and obscure. He says that when the divine being shades the full blaze of his beams as with a cloud drawn round about him "dark with excessive bright their skirts appear, yet dazzle heaven." Browning tries to express the same idea when he tells us that as he in vision gazed on the splendour with which Christ revealed Himself, he felt his brain:

Glutted with the Glory, blazing,
Through its whole mass, over and under,
Until at length it burst asunder
And out of it bodily there streamed
The too much glory, as it seemed.

None of these modern writers gives us as vivid impression of the glory of God as Isaiah does, partly because they lack his fine reserve. But they write in the conviction that in the gleaming brightness of the

Divine perfection there is something unbearable because of our sinfulness and also something vital which reproduces itself in us. The glory of God is at once the outshining of His holiness and the outpouring of His love.

That idea of God originated in experience; it is not merely a flight of imagination. Isaiah saw in spirit the glory that overwhelmed him; Paul says that at mid-day, when the sun of the desert shines most directly on the traveller, a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun shone around about him and those who journeyed with him. In that light Christ came to Paul bringing forgiveness, self-fulfilment and a destiny more splendid than the brightness around the throne. Pascal, the French scholar and saint, in broken accents tells of his soul's illumination. Professor E. F. Scott calls them "a few incoherent jottings, thrown down apparently within the very hour when he had passed through the convulsion which had changed his life." It gives us, therefore, what may be called an actual photograph of a soul in process of conversion. "Fire: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Not the God of the philosophers and the wise. Certainty, certainty. God of Jesus Christ. My God and thy God: thy God shall be my God. Forgetfulness of the world and of all but God. Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. I have fallen away, I have fled from him. May I not fall away from him forever." In these burning phrases, uttered when the ecstasy was hardly over, we have the best commentary on the brief allusions to his own experience which Paul wrote down after a lapse of years.

It may seem to us that these raptures are so far above the plane of ordinary human beings that they have no bearing on our condition and need, but they are on our level in their effects. Light is given to illuminate; the way which God had chosen for these men became clear when Christ entered their inner life. Everyone of us may find the light within shining through our nature so that we can see the way before us, God's path tracked ahead for each soul.

In Paul's case this blaze from the Eternal had effects which the figure he uses has to be strained to describe. He tells us in our text that the light shone into his heart; elsewhere we find it was like a spark in powder. In the engines which drive our cars the motion of the piston draws the gas into the cylinder and then the electric sparks explode it with such force that the engine wheels on its way. When Jesus appeared to Paul He said in the figurative language He always used: "Saul . . . it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." The ox-goad in those days was shod with iron, and when the ox kicked against the driver's urging his heel hit the iron point and only cut itself. Jesus saw that Saul in his fury was only hurting himself, mangling what was deepest in him. This means that in Paul's nature the gases of discontent were rising and pressing on the most sensitive spirit of the age; that divine spark set them off and the explosion smashed to pieces the prejudices and plans which had bound his soul. Can your imagination body forth what it meant when Paul called Jesus "Lord," and asked: "What shall I do, Lord?" He uses there the Greek word which the Old Testament translators had

chosen to translate "Jehovah." This means that the lightning flash in which the glorified Jesus came to him revealed to him the error and the wrong which had governed all his past, and on the instant he asked what new course the one whom he recognized as Lord of Life and Death would have him follow. It was conversion, a right-about-face, a turn in the opposite direction in both thought and action. The past was completely broken up, and he asks for Christ's plan of the new temple into which he might build the fragments at his feet.

Paul's conversion was, therefore, an explosion from within as well as an intervention from without. It was a revolution as well as revelation. It was the revolt of Paul's own nature against the man he had been and the things he was doing. Jesus never acted on the doctrine of total depravity, as it is now particularly understood; He always appealed to the good in the men He met, released it from its bonds, and placed it on the throne. There is something in each of us to which Christ can appeal and which he will so renew and reinforce that it can have its way with us. Probably it has been suppressed by our interests and activities and so prevented from control by the baser elements in our nature. But it is there, and Christ, who creates the soul anew, will fit it for sovereignty and crown it king.

We cannot but ask: What was the issue between Saul of Tarsus and Jesus of Nazareth? Because, until this point there was a barrier which kept the Son of God out of Paul's life. Here we mark the peculiar feature of Paul's conversion. It was not a change in

his attitude toward God; it was a change in his idea of what God was and wanted. He told King Agrippa, "I verily thought that I ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth; which also I did." He believed that the God of his fathers wished him to persecute to the death the followers of the Nazarene. As Jesus had foretold, he was convinced that by killing them he was doing God service. The moment he saw Jesus glorified and exalted, he recognized that He reigned in character; that all that Jesus stood for was enthroned and was God's will for men.

As I understand it, the issue between Saul of Tarsus and Jesus of Nazareth was the same as that between Christ and His own nation then and now, namely, the universal scope of His Gospel. Just note two or three points which bring this out.

The response of the crowd whose murderous attack on Paul in the temple led to his arrest is revealing. By permission of the Captain of the Roman cohort who had rescued him, Paul addressed the crowd in their own language. Because he spoke in Hebrew they listened as he told the whole story of his change from a persecutor to a follower of the Nazarene, until he came to Christ's warning that his own people would not listen to him in Jerusalem, and the terse command: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." At that word, Gentiles, they literally screamed: "Away with such a fellow from the earth for it is not fit that he should live." That any child of the Covenant should be commissioned of God to bring the nations into it was something they could not bear to hear.

They broke with Paul on the issue of a universal Gospel.

Wherever Paul preached Christ and salvation by faith in Him, he got the same response. Sometimes in anger, occasionally with deliberation, representatives of the Chosen Race decided that Jesus and His Gospel were inherently opposed to their privileges as God's elect. Every Jew of that period would fight to the death for Israel's exclusive position as the called of God; no believer of another race could enter the Covenant except through the gate of Judaism.

A modern Jew puts it this way: No one who believes in the divine mission of the Jewish nation can possibly accept as Messiah one who emphasized moral principles of world-wide application in preference to the peculiar national rites of Israel. Keeping these things in mind, turn to the beginning of Paul's persecutions. The charges laid against Stephen of speaking against the temple and Stephen's reply suggest this as the story behind his martyrdom. Stephen, the Greek-speaking Jew, with the broader outlook of those who had lived abroad, pointed out to the disciples that their attendance on the temple services was not the source of their joy and power. The Holy Spirit came upon them in their united worship as a Christian Fellowship in which they together entered into communion with their living Lord. Paul's keen mind at once discerned that if God could be approached in this direct manner there was no longer any necessary place for the peculiar rites and privileges of Israel, and therefore access to God through Christ would be open to all. This contradicted all that he held sacred and in white anger he voted for Stephen's execution and started the fierce

persecution which ended on the way to Damascus. In each of the four main accounts of Paul's conversion, his acceptance of Jesus as Lord is followed by his commission to evangelize the Gentiles. "What shall I do, Lord?" he enquired, on recognizing Jesus as the glorified Son of God, and when a disciple was sent to him with the answer, these are its terms: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." The different accounts of the conversion insist on the same connection in different terms. There was the issue: a universal Gospel; we owe our salvation to the fact that it prevailed.

This shows what your Christianity is and whereto it leads. It transcends race distinctions and discriminations. It unites you with the God who will come to all men to the full measure of their capacity and willingness to receive Him.

Paul found this consistent with the highest patriotism. We cannot find anywhere a nobler outburst of loyalty to one's own people than Romans 9:2-5:

I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.

Paul loved his nation too well to support her when she was in the wrong. Like other prophets of Israel's past, Isaiah and Jeremiah in particular, he would stand against his own kindred's wickedness even if he stood alone, and he would carry that opposition to the length of accepting death at their hands rather than be a consenting party to a sin that was self-destructive. Every power he had, reinforced by all that God could do through him, he put into persuading his nation to accept the divine purpose in their election: namely, to be the messengers of God's redemption to all mankind. So far from Paul's world-wide ministry making him less patriotic, it intensified his convictions of what Israel might become and accomplish under the leadership of their own Messiah, and it redoubled his efforts and multiplied his prayers on their behalf. You can see, therefore, what your Christianity would make of you and what it would not tolerate in you. Everything positive that you can do for your own people your religion would impel you to undertake; on the other hand, it would have no place for the patriotism which expresses itself in enmity toward other races. True Christianity will never allow you to become a nationalist. The nationalist stands for his own race as against other races; Christianity, according to Paul, stands for one's own nation on behalf of other nations. The curse which this nationalism has been to our time we know to our cost, and the peril of the present moment is due to the determination of certain governments and ideologies to impose their will and to advance their own interests at the cost of other nations. One of the dangers of the moment is our inability to realize that

our own loyalties have this negative element in them against all of which Christ sets His face.

The Spirit of Jesus as revealed to Paul would never let you become a bigot, because bigotry in religion is against others rather than for Christ. I saw this in a newspaper the other day: If you ask a man on the street in northern Ireland if he were a Christian, you might get a doubtful reply; if you asked whether he was a Protestant or Roman Catholic you would get immediate and emphatic response; the negative in faith appeals more strongly to our human nature than the positive. A man from Toronto, financed by Toronto people, visited certain United Church congregations in Newfoundland and asked the privilege of preaching the Gospel from their pulpits. He was strongly evangelical and was welcomed and given the opportunity he desired. But no sooner did he get any influence among the people than he began to attack the Church and to try to get them out of it. One minister in particular was perplexed and consulted the President of his Conference, who immediately visited the district, pointed out that this man's object was to split the Churches and create the divisions among Christians against which Christ prayed, and called on them to join in their own Church's evangelizing efforts. The people faced the peril, and sent their President off with this assurance: "There will be no division here." What Paul found in Christ is against the exclusiveness which denies others the privileges we enjoy, which refuses to recognize God's gifts to us as trusts to be administered in their interests, or to accept God's gifts to them as necessary to the enrichment of our faith. Such a spirit considers its own separateness with its pride and

prejudices as the end which all outside our circle should be made to serve. The different Churches in the ecumenical movement are re-examining the distinctive doctrines and principles for which their fathers stood and in every case with a view, not of refuting the beliefs of their brethren in other denominations, but of discovering the contribution which their own Church can make to the Christianity of the future.

Is there a point at issue between you and Christ, a teaching of His which you cannot accept, an interest of His which you cannot serve? Bring it to Him in prayer as well as in study; try in His presence to get His point of view. When you and He come together it will mean the opening before you of the design in His mind when He called you into being and your union with Him in working it out. Look at the divine description of that hate-ridden persecutor after Christ had won him: "He is a chosen vessel unto me." Paul in his conversion had reached reality; here was the will and power behind all that is. Here was the source of his being, and here also was the One to whom he would return when life's day was done. In his work the chosen of God deals with the ultimate as well as the universal; he is called to open to God the lives of all who listen to him that God may perfect His design in each of them. It is what a man is and is to become that the ambassador of Christ deals with, not particularly with his circumstances, the accidents of his position and possessions, or of the lack of them, for they are only tributary to the man's own life. God is in the human conflict anyway; His messenger's function is to open the people's eyes to the divine presence

and will and to secure their cooperation. You find your place in His plans by accepting Him. Hartley Coleridge has written:

Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given.
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact.

It is to that living faith that you are called today. After all, there is only one way of walking with God and that is to go His way.

IV AN IDEA AND AN ADVENTURE

ACTS 13:1-4

ACTS 9:15

A MAN with an idea—a sight familiar, yet always surprising. What gives his idea significance is that he invests his life in it; the man who dreams without following up the dream does not count in a work-a-day world. It seems so silly to a practical people for a man to throw his life after something that he thinks ought to be when he might get along so well handling the things that are.

There was Henry Ford making himself ridiculous on the roads of his native state trying to get his little gas-wagon to run. Then when he did find out how to make it go and had streaked the face of North America with his Model T's he said that when he saw a working man on holiday driving his wife and family through the country, he found satisfaction in the idea that he had brought enlargement of life to many who could not otherwise have had it.

There was Robert Gardiner who, in the 90's, bombarded ministers of all denominations with his idea of a united Christendom. When I was in my first charge I used to get his communications regularly urging the duty and possibility of re-union. The strength of denominational loyalties was such then that his efforts

seemed like attacking stone walls with a sling shot, but he kept at it in the face of multiplied discouragements until he won Bishop Brent, then through Bishop Brent his own Protestant Episcopal Synod, which he had never been able to capture single-handed, and then other influences in the same direction flowed in with theirs until now we see the ecumenical movement like a river in flood sweeping on to the fulfilment of Christ's dream of the oneness of His people.

There was Mackenzie of Korea, with his vision of Korea evangelized. His Highland vow to give his life to that land if God would spare him in a moment of peril, his refusal to accept the decision of the Board of his Church that a mission could not be established there, his successful appeal to the membership of his Church for the support he needed, his venture, and then the sacrifice of his life. But the little fund behind him had still some money in it when he passed on, and the ideal which it had been gathered to realize fastened itself on the conscience of the Church until under Alfred Gandier's inspired leadership the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces took hold of Mackenzie's project and built up there one of the most effective evangelizing agencies the Church of Christ has ever known. His biographer has chosen as the motto of Mackenzie's career the grain of wheat which by dying produces a harvest, and I should like to add another: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He will keep what I have committed unto Him against that day."

There was Woodrow Wilson staking the most brilliant political career of his time on the idea that Tennyson's "Parliament of man the Federation of the

World" was practical politics, and then suffering martyrdom for making it a national issue. His nation has not yet dealt adequately with the politicians who hounded him to his death to win a political victory, but as the world takes hold of his dream as the only practical way to save civilization from self destruction, it remembers the names of his opponents only to bury them in contempt.

So we go on. The man who believes, and believes strongly enough to risk everything for his faith, is a strange figure in the eyes of the world. His vision seems so vague and unreal in the face of the urgent necessities of the moment, the solid walls of prejudice and the mountains of self interest that feature the face of our world. To the ordinary worker it seems like turning a cloud bank against a castle; it may hide its outlines for a time but as for shaking it from its foundations the very thought is absurd. Yet ideas have led men to smash down the strongest fabrics of vested interests and established institutions which stood in the way of their realization. Man is the sort of being who listens to that sort of thing.

A friend of mine took John Watson's lectures in Philosophy in Queen's in 1911-1912. In the middle of one lecture, the old professor sat back in his chair, took off his black-rimmed spectacles, and reflected: "The change in German thought from an idealistic to a materialistic basis will have the most serious consequences for mankind. I predict that rivers of blood will flow as a consequence of that change. I do not advise you young men to go out and preach this, because you will be laughed at if you do; but people

will laugh at you because they do not know the power of ideas." The power of ideas! The thinker is the king of men.

If ever there was a man not only possessed, but obsessed with an idea, it was the apostle Paul. First, he broke with Jesus of Nazareth over the idea of a universal gospel. He persecuted the Church because her doctrine of access to God through Christ opened to all men the door into God's favour and did away with the chosen people's exclusive rights in the covenant. Then when he saw Jesus glorified, in the same glance he recognized love unlimited on the throne of the universe, and on the instant accepted Christ's call to put his life into carrying the good news to every nation. Nothing could daunt him. Disease, hunger and cold and weariness, perils by land and sea, persecution by his own countrymen, a pagan empire's opposition to the spiritual as its deadliest rival, the memory of his Master's death on the cross which haunted him at every step, he heeded not; instead he took them all in his stride as one glad to know the fellowship of Christ's suffering for a lost world's salvation. A man with an idea, and behind the idea a passion which burned with a quenchless flame until it was taken up into the central orb of glory.

Paul's originality did not consist in inventing this new idea, for new it was at that time. He discerned it kindling the minds around him and then flashing from soul to soul. He was the first to see that Stephen's idea of a spiritual religion opened everywhere a door to God. He felt it as a leaven working under the surface changing the nature of the people, or as a fire that

would so kindle the popular imagination that it would become a conflagration unless vigorous measures were taken to stamp it out. After accepting Christ he became a part of that movement that none but he really understood, and he made its message articulate, and gave it first a form and then a hero.

The original mind in any field is not necessarily one which creates a new idea out of nothing. It is rather one which discerns thought and aspirations, peculiar to the situation of the moment, slowly taking shape, and gives them a form and a voice. Kipling's popularity as a poet was due not only to the quality of his verse, but also the the fact that he gave ringing expression to the rising imperialism of his people. There were many in Darwin's day wrestling with the mighty idea of development, but he put it into a form which first startled and then captivated the intellect of his time. I can still remember the apprehension which rose in me when I got a letter from a young lad from the war zone which said that victory was sure unless the Germans sprang a new weapon on them. On both sides scientists were working feverishly toward the atomic bomb, and what would have happened if the enemy had succeeded in time appals the imagination. The Allies brought to perfection first what all the world was after.

You see, therefore, Paul's significance in the outward flow of Christianity. Energies of the Spirit were breaking through the dykes within which the nationalistic spirit of the Jewish Christian was trying to confine it. It could not be repressed. Touch a Gentile with the Gospel and his soul caught fire. Believers

everywhere were asking with Peter: Who are we that we can withstand God? Christ's first contact with Paul committed His convert to this conception of a salvation world-wide in its scope, an idea so great that small minds could not take it in and, therefore, fought it as a threatening spectre as Paul himself had done. By the message which came to the little group in Antioch the idea was turned into a programme, and the results which that venture produced and the illumination that they brought to Paul became a cause of controversy in which Paul's success lifted the Church to a conception of the grace of God so far above the visions of sages past that centuries have been occupied in working it out to its glorious conclusion and consummation.

All this sounds like an old story, doesn't it? But if, in the light of present day happenings in Church and State, you look at the character and characteristics of the central figure, his vision and his commission, his sufferings and his achievements, and, above all, his interpretations of God's purposes of grace and the way He is working them out in His dealings with men, you will find answers to our questions and healing for our hurt. For months I have been watching newspapers, magazines, books and book-reviews for ideas current in the minds of our contemporaries. I find the stream in flood. The perils of our position in this post-war period compel intense intellectual activity. Ideas crowd upon us from every quarter. What I invite you to do now is to put the principles behind Paul's career beside the searchings and yearnings of the present hour, and see their relevance and the resources which they place at the command of faith.

Now what have we in the story I have put before you? First, a world outlook and a world policy. The moment Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus glorified he accepted Him as Saviour of the world and Lord of all, and was answered promptly with a commission to evangelize the nations. John Wesley said, "The world is my parish"; long before, Paul had been given the world as his field. It stirred in him a sense of indebtedness to men of every race and class. "I am debtor," he wrote, "to the Greeks and Barbarians, to the wise and unwise. So much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also"; and Rome was then the centre of the known world.

Modern invention has given us "One World." Every nation is on its neighbour's door-step; even the vast Pacific cannot keep Orient and Occident apart. Is this "One World" to be a neighbourhood or a jungle? In answer our thinkers are aspiring to world-government, the establishment of "The Parliament of man, the Federation of the World." In the slow evolution of society, the family handed over certain of its rights and functions to the clan; witness the response of "Clan-Alpine's warriors true" to the call of the fiery cross. To secure a fuller measure of security, justice and peace, the clan was merged in the nation, for example, the union of the tribes of Israel under Saul and David, and of the Scottish clans under their Scottish king. With a view to world-power, the nation linked itself with kindred peoples to form the Empire, as with the British Commonwealth of Nations. Now the great powers of the world are summoned to surrender their claim to absolute independence and sovereignty to a world union that the rule of law may be upheld and the rights and interest of the weak and

strong alike may be maintained. The League of Nations may fail and the United Nations fall short of the expectations of its founders, but the movement toward a new world authority and sovereignty cannot be turned aside. Christians of the first generation leaped to this conception at a single bound. They found it in the heart of God; they saw that the Fatherhood of God involved the brotherhood of men, and they made it the foundation of the Church's policy. All our missionary enterprises are built on this belief that in the depths of its nature and on its heights, humanity is one, and in government as well as in missions this unity claims realization. The only policy that will make it effective is mutual good-will and helpfulness.

The next principle underlying the story we have outlined is self-giving to the uttermost. Christ reversed the methods and aims of the rulers of His time when He put His will to serve over against their lust for domination. "The Son of Man came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." That is to-day, instead of the few in authority keeping down the subject multitude, the divinely-gifted give themselves to lift men up and make them great. The triumphs of Christianity consist in the development of its converts to a height unattainable except in union with Christ.

This law of love runs into a head-on collision with two of the tendencies of our time. One is in government. Before the nations to-day is the choice between government by consent or government by force, between authority won by persuasion and authority

seized by violence. The idea behind the totalitarian state is the compulsory subjection of the people to a supreme ruler, who holds them down with the forces at his command. Wherever this system prevails the rights of the individual are forfeited to the state. Abraham Lincoln wrote: "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

This was the system which prevailed in Paul's time; the rule of Rome upheld by its legions, and cruelty in extreme forms used to enforce it. Over against it, Paul built up his little Christian communities, self-governing, freely choosing their own leaders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and investing them with authority over themselves which they believed to be from God. In the face of Roman tyranny and slavery they proclaimed the worth of man to God, the rights of men inviolable even by God Himself, and the capacity for goodness and greatness of the individual in union with Christ. In the long run, these Churches prevailed against the Empire.

Our Church has been following that example in every land. To the outcasts of India and to the Brahmin, to the literati of China and to the cannibals of the South Seas, the missionary's message is the same and its effects are the same. What we claim for ourselves as Christians, we claim for ourselves and for all as citizens. To reverse Lincoln's dictum, as we do not want to be masters, so we will not be slaves.

Parallel with the political or international issues of the hour, are the claims of self-interest in the economic

sphere. Here our problem is right at home, and here, as elsewhere, it counters Christianity. There is a strange spectacle before our eyes at present; the classes who benefit most under the existing social system and who stand to lose most by social change are forcing that change on the nation by their greed for gain. Wherever any individual or group insists on its own interests without regard to the effect of its claims on the general prosperity it begins to prey on the society which it is pledged to serve. This applies to trade, to management and labour, to the professions and to contending factions and sections in the nation. Such people are forcing the state to intervene for the protection of society as a whole, and so are handing over to government a new measure of control where personal responsibility and honour formerly ruled.

Over against that self-seeking spirit stands the Christian principle of self-investment in the good of others. Ever before us is the example of Him who, although "in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And, being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." By so doing He saved us with an everlasting salvation. This is our message to mankind, both for their redemption and inspiration, because any man who accepts the Crucified may become in his measure a saviour of his people.

The crowning factor in Paul's mission was the divine power at the command of his faith. The Holy Spirit was in action wherever Christ's ambassadors

proclaimed His Gospel. Only the Creator could create anew; even a man of Paul's character and calibre was only God's instrument. The Holy Spirit needs the man as His medium of communication, but eternal life is His gift notwithstanding.

In the light of this fact, look at the call for moral character to control power. Energy undreamed of ten years ago is now in the hands of men, but the strength of character to use it for the general good is lacking. The scientists who released the energy in the atom are the most urgent in the appeal for a moral development commensurate with the discoveries of the mind.

Do we Christians realize clearly enough, that when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His Baptism, Jesus found Himself in command of power sufficient for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and that in His temptations He turned away from every use of that power inconsistent with the love in the heart of God? He had discovered love on the throne of the universe and recognized that power must serve under love if life which is the gift of love is to survive. For centuries His Gospel has been offering to the world what scientists now complain they cannot get for themselves, namely, character to control the discoveries of the mind.

Is it any use for the Church to continue proclaiming this spiritual mesage to a world dominated by rough and ruthless forces? Let me tell you a story.

I entered McGill University in 1889, and shortly after we were visited by John R. Mott and Robert E. Speer, then in the first glow of their consecration to "the evangelization of the world in their generation."

Speer told us that with his family's approval and support he had embarked on a career which promised him position, power and wealth, but that he had abandoned it to invest his life in the missionary enterprise. Some of his friends were disappointed and asked him where he got his morbid desire for martyrdom. His answer was that he felt no desire for martyrdom, but that he wanted to put the one life he had to live where it would do the most good for God and man. There was no doubt in his mind that the life sown as seed in the mission fields of the world would yield the richest harvest. About the same time Mott, then a senior student in Cornell and also fascinated by the prospects before him, was coming late into a student meeting where the speaker was one of the famous Studd brothers. Just after he entered Mott heard the speaker repeat God's challenge to Jeremiah: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." He heard nothing farther. He saw the full implications of that word and did not shirk them. From that moment forward his life was not his own. That year the Student Volunteer Movement came into existence and Mott was one of the original hundred. These two men came together in their work for the evangelization of the world.

Bear in mind the character of that period. The spirit of imperialism was then rising in our people. The white races, particularly our own, believed implicitly in the superiority of our civilization and in the value of the contribution we had to make to other races whom we considered backward. Our armies and navies were so powerful that we felt able to put through any scheme for world advancement which our people might

adopt. Over against all this these two young men put forward Christ's message of world-conquest by love.

These young men did not invent that idea. They felt it in the air. Wherever the revivals of the decades before them changed men it gave them an impulse to share their salvation with all men everywhere. But these two men gave the idea picturesque embodiment and driving force. Their influence was magnetic. Their appeals were irresistible. Year after year they moved thousands of the Church's brilliant and highly trained sons and daughters to volunteer for service overseas. They brought millions in money into the treasury of the Churches for the support of those who volunteered. As the whole world now recognizes, the success of the movement into which they had thrown their lives was miraculous. The Presbyterian Church here has just been celebrating the 100th Anniversary of John Geddie's sailing for the islands of the South Seas. Only 100 years of missionary endeavour, but when American airmen were forced down on those islands they were, as one of them wrote home, feasted instead of being feasted upon, by the natives. In that short time the lowest of the human race have been lifted to the stature of Christian heroes, embodiments of the Christian graces of love, kindness and truth. In a recent number of *The International Review of Missions* there is a description of the return from the war of a battalion from a Central African tribe. They brought with them a record of disciplined valour that any military unit might envy. The writer said that as he looked into their personnel he found here a Christian teacher from one mission station, there the convert of another mission station, and, while such new-born

souls were not the majority, they were a leavening influence which changed the spirit of the whole. These are but samples from the fields of the world and enable us to understand how it had happened that the Christian Church is an organized force in every land on earth.

These men have had a wider influence than even that. The world missionary conference in Edinburgh, 1910, brought together for the first time all the Churches engaged in world evangelization, except the Roman. For the first time on a common platform each church had to recognize the spiritual resources and spiritual effectiveness of denominations widely different from themselves, but one with them in their faith and love and loyalty to Christ. In those gatherings William Temple dedicated his life to the cause of ecumenical Christianity and afterward became its inspired leader. Today the World Council of Churches, as yet only in the process of formation, is its strongest force for relief and reconciliation and its advocates are giving inspired leadership in defining the conditions of a just and durable peace.

The situation today is widely different from what it was in the days I have described. The western nations are humiliated before their brethren in other lands by the tragedies into which they have been betrayed by their pride and cupidity and "heathen heart which put its trust in reeking tube and iron shard." Two world wars have shattered all our confidence in the achievements of the past. But the Christ to whom we gave only partial allegiance remains. He wrought wonders with what we gave; He now demands

everything. He points out that only the trappings in which mistakenly we arrayed our faith have gone; the faith itself stands stronger than ever.

While we are waiting for God to send our generation leaders of the calibre of those whom he sent to the past generation, we can provide the field and the forces for their endeavour. May we not, each of us, take this position: There is something in God for me which I have not yet received, or attained, or acquired, or achieved. When He meets my need to the full, I shall have what my world requires. The question is not, what can I do for God? but what is God waiting to do with me? Each of us here feels, I am not the one to catch and set forth a new idea for which the world is waiting. No, but I can prepare the way for those who will. God's resources are not exhausted; He has arrows in His quiver as bright and keen as any used in days gone by; when His hour comes He will draw them forth to the discomfiture of the enemies of His cause. In the meantime, wait, watch and pray, that, when the call comes, we may be ready.

V

THE DART AT THE HEAD OF A LIE

GALATIANS 3: 10-14

ONE WHO called himself a man of the world described his church-going in this way. He was mildly interested in the service of worship, particularly in the hymns, although the repetition of old forms sometimes bored him. When the sermon began his mind was on the alert for anything that might bear on life as he knew it. But when the preacher started off on something about Paul, or Moses, or Melchizedek, his mind promptly wandered away to think of the interesting things he did last week or to plan for the week to come. The preacher's interests and his were in totally different worlds, and there was no contact between them.

The question may arise this morning: Why drag Paul and his old controversy into a service at this time? There are so many movements of vital importance afoot now in which we want to find our place that it sounds foolish to go behind them all to those disputes of the past. Is Paul then irrelevant? Is this epistle to the Galatians only a musty old document that can appeal only to the antiquarian? Or is it as modern as the Marian Congress just held in Ottawa, and does it deal with the issues raised by that Congress as does no other pamphlet in the language of men? I take up this subject this morning because I find in it a burning

answer to that question, and also the most emphatic statement possible of the truth by which men live.

Galatians is a body blow dealt a deadly error. Robert Browning in one of his poems refers to certain questionings in his time about the truth of Christianity, and concludes:

I still, to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to begin:
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,
The Corruption of Man's Heart.

Galatians is a dart launched at the head of a lie. More, it is a torpedo launched against a ship bound for the port of salvation and carrying passengers without the passports required for landing. Browning says: "This, to begin"; Galatians did more than begin. It taught Original Sin, and with it God's redemption from all sin; *i.e.*, it did more than diagnose the disease; it prescribed God's remedy. But the form in which the divine message is presented is so human that it touches men on every level. Galatians is an outburst of horror at the sight of men with the divine remedy in their hands diluting it with quack concoctions until its effectiveness is lost. The whole man is thrown into Paul's protest, body, mind and soul. We are not looking at a skillful fencer but at one who thrusts to kill. Often we plead for the discussion of principles without personalities; blood-earnestness of this type knows that principles do not exist apart from persons, and that to destroy an evil principle you must destroy the influence of the man who holds it. It is because there are errors abroad now demanding adulation and getting

it from thousands who know better that this furious attack of the evangelical spirit against an ancient form of the same error is so much in point today.

There is one issue in religion age after age, and one only; God's claim on men, the vital personal union into which He calls them, His jealousy of everything that comes between Him and His chosen, and the fiery wrath to which love turns when the enemies of God attempt to destroy those whom He sacrificed to save. The prophecy of Amos is the Old Testament parallel to the epistle to the Galatians. In it we find the same concern over vital truth in peril, the same conviction that the eclipse of the truth left people in the darkness of death, the same stern condemnation of those guilty of upholding error, and the same sense of impending doom. The evil which aroused that herdsman to action was moral as well as religious. Israel in the days of Jereboam II was a victorious nation, prospering by the plunder of her conquests. It is easy to be religious when things flow our way, and Israel in prosperity piled sacrifices on Jehovah's altars while encouraging the powerful to increase their wealth by oppressing the poor. They were making their sacrifices a substitute for justice, and a just God could not but reject such worship. The authorities silenced the rough prophet of the wilderness when he threatened violence as the punishment of wrong, so he committed his denunciation to writing, and that inspired document interpreted to Israel her doom when the judgment he foretold descended on her.

Back of Amos was Elijah, another prophet of the wilderness. This meant that these two men were no part of the life they condemned but were more keenly

sensitive to its evils than spirits calloused by prolonged contact with it. Jezebel had set herself to replace the worship of Jehovah with the inhuman rites of the idolatry of her own people. She had succeeded first in overcoming the scruples of her brilliant but unstable husband, and, next, in driving the servants of Jehovah into hiding. Elijah stood out against her alone, not because there were no others who believed as he did, but because he was the only one ready to risk everything for the honour of his God. It was when he was still alone that he dealt a deadly blow on Mount Carmel to Israel's faith in the new religion. After that dramatic exhibition of the impotence of Baal and the power of Jehovah available to faith no Israelite could believe in the possibility of a substitute for the God of their fathers. Although Elijah won the first round, Jezebel came back to win the second, and Elijah had to flee, but her triumph was only one of physical force, and there, whether she knew it not, the movement was started which was soon to upset everything that she stood for, herself and her family included.

John the Baptist condemned Herodias for adultery, and Herodias had him beheaded, but his martyrdom only emphasized his protest. John Chrysostom's eloquence was never as passionate and convincing as when he held up to public scorn the Empress Eudoxia's craving for worship which Roman Emperors used to claim. She drove him into exile and to his death, but Empress worship had received its death sentence.

The Popes in the 16th century sold indulgences all over Europe for money to complete St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. This offered God's pardon for money;

the repentance of the individual or his personal character did not figure so long as he had the price. It was a direct contradiction of God's aim at the reproduction of His character in men, a frustration of the object for which Christ died. Luther, then an unknown monk, but one who had learned by sore experience that justification is by faith alone, struck at the system by nailing his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg at the moment when preparations for the coming of the Pope's representative were at their height. Here are some of the theses:

1. An Indulgence is and can only be the remission of a merely ecclesiastical penalty; the Church can remit what the Church has imposed; it cannot remit what God had imposed.
2. An Indulgence can never remit guilt; the Pope himself cannot do such a thing; God has kept that in His own hand.
3. It cannot remit the divine punishment for sin; that also is in the hands of God alone.

Similarly John Knox set himself against the determined effort of Mary, Queen of Scots, to reimpose the yoke of the papacy on Scotland. Mary brought all her resources to bear on her people, their loyalty to the ancient Stuart line, her own royal blood, her personal beauty and charm, her romantic story, the influence of the Court and of the nobility who upheld it, and the power in her hands as head of the State, and Knox stood out against her and led the people against her. He is accused still of a lack of chivalry, but when the truth of God and the future of his people were at stake, he did not dare to allow sentiment to weaken

his convictions or his stand. Without Knox the infant Reformation must have been strangled in its cradle.

All these cases show what a stand for truth costs. The entire personality of the champion of the truth is thrown into the struggle. His life is forfeit if he fails; it may have to be laid down in order to win the victory. In the instances cited some of the called of God encountered individuals; if the enemy of their cause could have been eliminated, the system of error would have collapsed. Elijah had Jezebel, John the Baptist Herodias, John Chrysostom the Empress, John Knox the Queen; in each case it was a personal antagonist who held the key position and who had to be overthrown. Not so Amos or Luther; they had a system with far-reaching ramifications; nevertheless, it had to be a man with convictions stronger than his love of life who opposed it. Truth incarnate in a man of God fought and prevailed. Sometimes the hero of the faith died for his faith, as with John the Baptist and John Chrysostom in the early centuries, and John Huss and young Bonhoeffer in our own time; in such cases the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

Turn now to the crisis which called forth the epistle to the Galatians. Saul of Tarsus had broken with Jesus of Nazareth over the universality of Christ's Gospel. His keen mind had detected in Jesus' position and teachings a spirit which reached out to all the world, and he concluded that if this prevailed the blessings of the covenant would be Israel's exclusive privilege no longer. To make this extension of the privileges of God's grace forever impossible, he had

persecuted to the death the followers of the Nazarene. Then when on the way to Damascus the glorified Jesus laid hold on him, he saw universal love on the throne of the universe, and on the instant identified himself with it. In the four accounts which he gave of his conversion his commission to evangelize the Gentiles followed his acceptance of Christ.

His own mission to the Gentiles had started on the crest of a wave of enthusiasm which was sweeping the Gentiles into the Church in Antioch. Then, in response to a call of God he had carried the Gospel into Asia Minor and had founded his churches in Galatia on the Gospel offer of salvation to all who would believe in Christ. Then when Jewish Christians had countered with the demand, "Except ye be circumcized and keep the law, ye cannot be saved", he had met them in a head-on collision in the Council of Jerusalem, and had overthrown them. With the message of the Council in his hands he had revisited his churches in Galatia to their comfort and encouragement. Then with his own ideas of the way of salvation clarified by the controversy, he had embarked on his mission to Europe, had founded the churches of Philippi and Thessalonica, had written the two epistles to the Thessalonians, and then had lost himself in his work in Corinth, where he was proving afresh that the Word of the Cross was the power of God and the wisdom of God.

At this point he got word that his opponents, vanquished in the Council of Jerusalem, had carried their version of the Gospel into his churches in Galatia and were meeting with astonishing success. Paul's experiment in Galatia had been the means of their defeat; they felt that if they won over these churches the

ground which they had lost might be regained. So behind Paul's back they had crept into his little churches, whose members were still but babes in Christ, and had corrupted the simplicity of their faith with Jewish notions. The news threw Paul into a panic of fear and exasperation. He saw not only the truth of the Gospel perverted in churches purchased for Christ with blood and tears, but the broadening stream of the Christian salvation being narrowed between the walls of sectarian prejudice and nationalistic pride. He could not leave his work in Corinth to go to the rescue of his spiritual children, so he dictated this short letter in a desperate effort to save the situation. From beginning to end it is protest and appeal; invective is followed by indignant affirmation; the Galatians' own experience of inward change and enduement by the Spirit is cited as an example of the effectiveness of his Gospel; this in turn is followed by argument that such a spiritual movement could never find its culmination in a physical act; the positions he had taken in the defence of their liberties at Antioch and Jerusalem are described in personal terms; his style breaks under the stress of his emotion as a stream is broken by cataract or waterfall; here and there gleams of inspiration break through to the illumination of succeeding generations; and he brings all to a head in this declaration of faith: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What was it that inflamed Paul's spirit to such a pitch as this? There was, first, his natural resentment at his critics' personal attacks, coupled with anxiety about the effect of those attacks on his spiritual children. His opponents appear to have questioned the

genuineness of Paul's spiritual experience, and with the doubts which they cast on his vision of the Risen Lord there went the denial of his apostleship. Such personal insinuations and accusations are provoking in any situation, but when young Christians have their faith in their own spiritual father undermined in this fashion, it gives their religion a shock from which many will not recover.

Further, this attempt to fasten Jewish ordinances on Christianity was an effort to turn back the tide. The spontaneous movements of the Spirit, out of which Paul's mission arose, were all broadening the scope of the Gospel to include believers of all races and classes; this programme required men to become Jews in order to be Christians. No one could quote Jesus in support of such a narrowing and hardening process; not only His precepts and practices, but the principles on which His Gospel was based favoured Paul's view that "in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, but all are one in Him."

But if these factors stirred Paul's anger and fears, his whole nature went out against the idea that Christ needed to be supplemented in His work of grace. Dr. James Denney once wrote:

Now the faith of the primitive Church, as it unfolds itself in the early chapters of Acts, "regarded Jesus in His exaltation as forming with God, His Father, one divine causality at work for the salvation of men." When the Galatian issue arose, Paul took the position that "whoever brings into religion anything else than Christ and faith, as though anything

else could conceivably stand in the same plane, is, wittingly or unwittingly, the deadly enemy of the Gospel." . . . The intolerant verse we have before us means that Christ is the whole of the Christian religion, and that to introduce other things side by side with Him, as if they could supplement Him, or share in His absolute significance for salvation, is treason to Christ Himself. Christ Crucified—the whole revelation of God's redeeming love to sinners is there; the sinful soul abandoning itself in unreserved faith to this revelation—the whole of the Christian religion is there.¹

What infuriated Paul was, first, the attempt to chain Christ's grace to a ritual drawn up for a particular people at a particular time, and, second, to treat this ceremonial as in any way worthy of mention in connection with what God had done to save men from sin. To Paul man's sin and sinfulness had opened a chasm between the human and the divine, deep and wide enough to engulf the whole human race. He had always considered himself as the chief of sinners because he had persecuted the Church of God, and that meant, he explained, torturing and murdering Christians who refused to renounce Christ. If we want to see what his observation added to his experience, we might read the first chapter of Romans, or the description which Sholem Asch gives in his book *The Apostle* of ordinary conditions in Antioch when Paul was invited to preach there, or the stories of Roman cruelty in enforcing their sovereignty, for example, the 2,000 crosses erected near a single city as Rome's vengeance

¹ Dr. James Denney, "Preaching Christ." *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, ed. by James Hastings, Vol. II. T. & T. Clark.

for its revolt. We have had horrifying revelations in our own time of the capacity of the human heart for sheer wickedness and corruption; Paul moved among such abominations wherever he went. Now, imagine any serious thinker offering a few petty ceremonies as a cure for spiritual maladies of that sort! Why, it cost God His Son to provide redemption for such sinners. To mention anything that man could do in the same breath with this stupendous sacrifice which only God could make was to Paul rank blasphemy.

Besides, the man who knows, who has met God face to face, who has felt the Creator in action in his own soul, who has found love at the heart of the universe and his own destiny in that love, cannot imagine such a being confining His grace to the narrow and shallow channels of any nation's traditions and expectations. To catch a vision of the grace of God in its world-wide sweep and its outlook on eternity, and to be caught up in it is to be lifted far above the local and the temporary. What Paul had in common with the creative spirits of every age was that he had tried everything man could do to achieve reconciliation with God and knew the bitterness and futility of the struggle. Then when God in Christ gave him freely all that he had striven to attain and a thousandfold more, he could not but share that experience and impart that truth to every brother-man whose heart was open to receive them.

In view of these things, what are we to say of the exaltation of the Virgin Mary to the position of mediator? A report of the Marian Congress in Ottawa gave this as their watchword: "To Jesus through

Mary." Why through Mary? A young French Canadian convert told a group of us years ago that he had been taught that Jesus was antagonized by the treatment He had received at the hands of men, and that it was the tender heart of Mary who interceded with Him for us. Msgr. Fulton Sheen closed a broadcast last March with this statement: "On the last day, when we go before God for judgment, we shall hear Him say the most consoling words of all, and the pledge of our eternal salvation, 'I've heard My Mother speak of you.'"

We do want to cooperate with the Church of Rome in everything that we hold in common with them, but there are some issues between us on which there can be no compromise. One is the statement of Scripture: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Mary is presented to us in the New Testament as a beautiful young woman, her spirit saturated with the poetry and prophecy of her people, and herself vouchsafed the highest privilege ever given to a human being. But she is a woman with a woman's limitations. There is not a scintilla of evidence in the Scriptures, or anywhere else, for the claims made for her by that Church. They are based wholly on the Roman Church's arbitrary decree. For them to put any human being side by side with the crucified and risen Lord as if they could supplement Him, or share His absolute significance for salvation, is treason to Christ Himself. The issue for which Luther and Knox contended and Ridley and Latimer died is not yet dead; here, as elsewhere, eternal vigilance is the price of safety.

The next point on which there can be no compro-

mise with that Church is its claim to pronounce men forgiven without any reference to their personal character or personal relations with God. I do not know what they say in their official statement of doctrine, but I do know the impression they leave on their people's minds. It is this: You keep right with the Church and we will settle about your future. The New Testament teaches that God's object in redemption is to make men Christ-like and unite them with God; Christ fails in every case where this change does not take place. No Church can guarantee salvation to anyone who refuses to turn personally from sin to God and to trust God for a personal transformation into the image of His Son.

Another error even more serious is that which feels no need of Christ's incoming or of the change He can bring. People of our time have seen our world crash around us and human wickedness yawn as a great gulf before us, and yet they still assume that man is sufficient unto himself and that he can become by his own effort all he needs to be. They assume that if he does the decent thing by everyone he can let the future look after itself. Once I heard a man quote with approval a novelist's saying that he who meets his obligations to men at the same time meets his obligations to God. Exactly the reverse is true; our obligations to God come first and include our obligations to men.

Humanism is a more deadly error than Popery. If all that man is claiming for himself were possible there would have been no necessity for the sacrifice God made and the suffering His Son endured. We have

seen what God intended to accomplish by His sacrifice: "In Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Apart from this new creation wrought in us by the divine Spirit, there is no hope for man in the present or future.

Our call to-day is to exalt the Christ. No Christian writer ever penned a truth deeper and more splendid than this: "Christ is all in all." He is the north star to mariners on life's troubled sea, the luminary which never sets and directs all who look upward to their destination. He was the first who in action as well as in thought took in the whole world, and paid the price of redemption. He conquered those twin monsters, sin and death, by enduring the worst that they could do, and everything that his victory involved for Him, including resurrection, He shares with His people. In His risen power He is a living presence in every heart open to Him, ready to subdue our nature to the will of God. Without Christ I can do nothing, be nothing, nor become anything enduring or worth enduring; with Christ the Creator's design will be wrought out in me and what He aimed to do through me shall be done. When all things earthly are slipping from under me, I shall find Christ the solid rock under my faith and hope, and when this earthly frame dissolves, He will come for me that where He is I may be also. When we remember that the Son of God is the Eternal Word through whom the Father works out His designs in His universe, the assurance that we shall be with Him forever opens a prospect far beyond the capacity of the human imagination to conceive. Each of us can say as we sing: "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."

VI

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

I CORINTHIANS 1:17 - 2:5

HERE IS a story from a popular Canadian novel of a generation ago. A congregation of Highlanders in Glengarry sent for a young minister from Montreal to preach at their service preparatory to the Communion. He was stately in appearance and in his style of speech, and he had behind him the rich religious tradition of the Scot. Although young, he was grounded deeply in Christian doctrine and was noted in that region for strong exposition of the attributes of God in their bearing on the lives of men. On this occasion he chose for his text John 3:16, and he drove that message of the divine love home to loveless hearts. There was no escaping the judgment of that text and his application of it to every corner of loveless lives, the coldness of their hearts toward God, their lovelessness in the home, in society, in the church, and toward the world for whom Christ died, and the people's conviction of failure rose with Highland emotion in response to his message. Now, inspiration gives the preacher, like Browning's musician, the gift to frame out of three sounds, not a fourth sound, but a star; over the horizon of that little congregation a divine light arose that day; they were the first to see it, but their surprise turned the eyes of the whole county in its direction. To change the figure, the answer to that people's

devotion to the love which the preacher proclaimed and the sacrament symbolized, was like the sacrifice on Elijah's altar on Mt. Carmel, and in answer to their prayer the divine fire descended and spread until it became a conflagration. The famous Glengarry revival arose out of that service, and for generations the religion of that people was governed by it.

Now that was a great hour in any Christian ministry, indeed, in any church's history. That preacher was one of my teachers in his white-haired maturity, and one day in class he told us this story. On a certain Sunday evening he took his pastor's place in his own church. His preparation, both intellectual and spiritual, was made as usual with exacting care; he did not say that, but his students knew it; but that sermon just would not go. He did his best, but neither in his own heart nor in the congregation could he detect the slightest warmth, not to speak of fire. He spoke to no one after the service, but hurried back to the vestry where he threw himself down in utter discouragement, saying to himself that if ever anyone had made a fool of himself in the pulpit he had that evening. After a minute or two he heard a tap at the door, and a young man came in all aglow with a new vision of God which that sermon had brought him. The questions he had to ask were vital, but they were soon answered, and a thankfulness to God for the salvation given there and then took hold of him and kept hold of him all his days. God had been using that preacher most effectively when he was least aware of it.

I am sorry for the preacher who is master of his moods; it means that there is no give and take between

his soul and the author of his message. The Christian preacher is the commissioner of love; he aims at conviction and decision in the loveless. The content of his message is the truth about love and he cannot deliver it with heart unstirred. Besides the miracle of the new creation cannot be wrought in a hearer without the cooperation of the divine Spirit with the speaker. Often his consciousness of that Spirit whose agent he is grows clear and strong; sometimes there seems to be nothing but gray ashes where once the fire burned. But if his dependence is on God, he will be used by God whether his feelings are aroused or not.

How perfectly Paul expresses this in I Corinthians 2:3-4: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and power." His mood kept the man himself in the background but only to give place to the power of God. And this was by far Paul's most effective mission. God used him miraculously while he felt all alone.

Here is a story behind this passage. After a strange series of restraints and constraints Paul had been called into Europe on his second missionary journey. His ministry was fruitful and a church grew up in every place that he visited. But no sooner did his message catch the imagination of the people than wanton persecution drove him away. He was racked with anxiety about his converts, particularly in Thessalonica; mere babes in Christ they were, lambs of the flock surrounded by wolves and robbers. From Athens he sent his companions to revisit these scattered groups and to

confirm them in the faith. While they were away he met the philosophers of Athens on their own ground with a speech remarkable for its skill and comprehensiveness, but he was laughed at when he mentioned the resurrection of the dead. Alone and disheartened he went to Corinth, at that time the Glasgow or Chicago of Greece, and as famous for its wickedness as for its wealth. In the face of the luxury, power and misery of its paganism, he decided to change his methods and confine himself to the story of the Cross. The results astounded him; converts were multiplied; and the most brilliant congregation of the period was built up around him.

Years after he wrote the story of his mood and message on that occasion. During Paul's mission in Ephesus the Judaisers who had caused the trouble in Galatia, came to Corinth and turned a section of the church against Paul. Then Apollos from Alexandria, intellectual and eloquent, took up the work in Corinth, and while sympathetic with Paul, he presented Christianity in a philosophic garb which attracted the Greeks with their love of wisdom. Splits appeared in the little church, some saying "I am of Paul," others "I am of Apollos," and so on. Paul felt constrained to explain the method he had used and the reason for it, and to point out that it was his preaching of the Cross which had brought them to Christ. The result is the chapter before us, the most splendid vindication in literature of Christian evangelism and of its method, the word of the Cross.

I would therefore suggest as the motto of this sermon Moses' words to Israel at the Red Sea: "Stand

still and see the salvation of our God.”¹ Paul’s argument is that these Corinthians’ salvation is due solely to God’s sovereign grace. The means which God had used to save them was Paul’s message of Christ as crucified, but it was God the Creator who had used that message to create them anew. Ideal Christian preaching is the quiet presentation of God’s way of salvation delivered in dependence on the Holy Spirit who can be counted on to use this word as His instrument for claiming His own. When the riots arose in Corinth the Lord said to Paul one night, “Don’t be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city.”² That is to say, Christ aimed through Paul’s preaching to reach many whom He had already chosen and to bring them into His light and love, and the word of the Cross was splendidly effective in Christ’s hands.

This message of salvation through a crucified Messiah was offensive to the natural man, whether Jew or Greek. Note Paul’s careful choice of words, “The Jews *asked* a sign; the Greeks *seek* wisdom.” The Jews *demand*ed signs, *i.e.*, action from God as the only evidence of divinity which could be accepted. The Greeks *sought* wisdom, a discovery and attainment to be reached by intellectual effort. Nothing seemed clearer to the Jewish mind than the argument of Mark 15:32: “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the Cross, that we may see and believe.” In other words; your helplessness proves you an imposter; your Messiahship would be demonstrated even now

¹ Exodus 14:13.

² Acts 18: 9-10.

by the nails springing out and you descending to the discomfiture of your foes. They did not see what Paul saw and the ages acknowledge, that His divinity was proven by the love that persisted right through the agonies of Calvary in bearing to its doom the sin of man. The Greeks reached after a conception of God which they could prove by their own reasoning, and accept as reasonable, thus demanding that it harmonize with their preconceived ideas. Paul's irony in assuming that the Greek wisdom of his time was really wise was turned, not against the noble seriousness of thinkers like Socrates and his successors, but against the subtlety of the Sophists whose object was not to discover truth but to win a verdict by the cleverness of their speeches. Once in caustic mood, Dr. W. T. Herridge remarked: "Some people think; others think they think." Paul put the Sophists in this second class. Preachers are often warned that if they fail to capture the thought of their time they can never hope to bring their Gospel to bear on the problems with which their hearers are wrestling, and the warning is always in point. But philosophers are here warned that if their thinking ceases to deal with the facts of experience and the needs of the soul, thought will swing away from them as it did from the Sophists of Paul's time, never to return.

Over against all this Paul set the fact of the Cross. Here is something which God has done, and has done once for all. It is something which He has done for men which they could never do for themselves; their part is to accept it. Because it takes them in the condition in which it finds them and lifts them into union with God.

Paul's horror of sin was always in the back of his mind, particularly when he is thinking about the Cross. He went through the world open-eyed, not dreaming of ideal manhood, but seeing men as they are; and what he saw of the vice and wickedness of his time drove him to such appalling descriptions of human degradation as we find in Romans 1 & 3. And he felt involved in it. Had he not persecuted to the death the saints of God, redeemed by the blood of His Son? We can appreciate this now as we could never have done a generation ago. We have found a capacity for cruelty in human nature that no one thought was there before the war. The tragedy of the ages has befallen our race in our time because man's will to power over his fellows has driven him to extremes in crime which have surpassed anything recorded in history. The "will to power" in the history of conquerors is all too familiar to us, but never had it more disastrous consequences than in our time. Look at the horrible things which men's lust is driving them to do now in Christian Ontario. This has arisen out of our common life; we are somehow involved in what we abhor. Paul saw sin in these identical forms everywhere he turned. He saw it in its relation to God and in the light of God's holiness before whose unapproachable purity even the seraphim veil their faces. He saw it in relation to God's love. And he saw God meeting it in a head-on collision on Calvary. There human wickedness came to a head in the crucifixion of the Son of God. There the love of God came to head in bearing sin at its worst in order to turn men from it forever. With the sin of man so appalling in its nature and its consequences, the action which would overthrow it must be

on a range wider and an intensity deeper than the evil. That is what we find in the Cross. Do you wonder that when Paul thought of Rome with its depths of depravity and its world-conquering might he exclaimed, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes."

Gospel preaching then and now is a statement of fact, a tragedy and a transaction which has taken place in the history of our race. As such it requires plain, straight telling, "not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ be emptied of its power." "The Cross of Christ was not to be presented in a philosophic dress such as was pleasing to Hellenic days lest the pure substance should be missed in the attractiveness of the form." In one of Ruskin's later works he complained that his readers had often admired his literary style to the obscuring of his message, and he resolved thereafter to put his ideas in such simple language that no one could miss his meaning or his object. Just a little while ago an advertiser said that when the wording of an advertisement was so clever that readers commented on its cleverness, their attention was drawn away from the article advertised; the ideal advertisement concentrates attention on the thing to be sold and on nothing else. A few days ago a friend sent to our house an advertisement exceedingly clever in both its cartoons and its rhymes. Everyone who saw it laughed at it, but I did not hear one of those who enjoyed its cleverness mention the article it was intended to bring before the public.

That was the fault of the Sophists of Paul's day; they wanted admiration for their brilliant style without regard for the truth which their sentences con-

tained. As Cicero said, "Their poor little syllogisms only prick like pins; even if they persuade the mind, they effect no change of heart, and the listeners go away just as they came."

Paul felt the lure of the intellectual and determined not to let it turn him from his purpose, so he decided to present the fact of Christ and His Cross with a directness which no one could misunderstand or evade. The effect was that he reached all classes and conditions of men. It was to man as man that he spoke, and men as men answered. Note the living phrases in verses 26 to 29:

For consider your call, brethren: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Not many, but some; there were a few converts in Corinth who had stood high in its religious and social circles, but the masses of his converts were from the poor and the slaves. True religion lifts the submerged to places where their capacities find the inspiration, recognition and opportunity which develop them, but it does not pass by those already privileged. In its early years it penetrated even to the Imperial circle. Russia liquidated her middle and upper classes including her intelligentsia, and look at the mess that her leaders are making in world affairs without them. They

are producing great men—look at their soldiers; by virtue of their numbers, if nothing else, the masses will produce more men of genius than the classes: but leaders qualified by their family heritage, their education and experience to understand other nations are lacking in Russia to the loss of all mankind. France made the same mistake in her revolution with equally catastrophic consequences. In every reform and revolution Britain has retained the loyalty and ability of those whose privileges she curtailed, while she gave the common people more and more of their rights. When Kaiser Wilhelm's soaring ambition threatened the liberties of Europe, it was David Lloyd George, a son of the common people and committed to the cause of the common people who put the drive into Britain's campaign and kept it there to the end. Dr. Glover has said, "Hesitation is the badge of the scholarly tribe;" it certainly was not the badge of this tribune of the people. When a graver peril threatened his country later, it was Winston Churchill, adventurer, author, authority on the history and the science of war, and proud descendant of Marlborough, who gave utterance to her spirit of defiance and through her defended the liberties of the world. Paul himself belonged to the intelligentsia and bore the proudest titles of his time. In Jesus' day, the carpenter had a standing above the rank and file, and as long as the Magnificat remains the greatest hymn of the Christian Church, we must recognize that in the human parentage of the Son of God there was genius of the first order as well as David's royal blood. But Jesus and Paul both recognized the capacities for God and His service to be found in men as men without regard to

race or rank; why, even the nonentities God chose to bring to naught the entities, the people who thought they were everything. Sherwood Eddy once reminded us that three of the foremost Christians of the age were from classes in India so low that their own people thought them unfit for the most ordinary privileges of life. Yet Christ made them a power both in their own land and in the world. So it has been in every age.

The plain fact is that when Christian truth is embodied in profound arguments it wins no converts; when the Gospel is offered in simple faith, it changes people into the likeness of Christ. No period has had such examples of its effectiveness as our own. In mission halls in the cities, in remote frontier settlements, and in the work of missionaries in other lands, the simple story of the Cross has been the power of God unto salvation.

The effectiveness of this appeal is due to the fact that it presents a person to persons for their personal acceptance and trust. Christianity is primarily not a system of truth to be understood but a person to be relied upon. And a person in two aspects, suffering or having suffered, and active.

It is not surprising that the doctrine of a suffering Messiah was a scandal to the Jews. They believed in one God who held all the issues in His hands, whose purposes could not be frustrated, and who intended to intervene through His Messiah for the deliverance of His people and the overthrow of their enemies. To ask them to accept One as their Messiah who became the victim of Israel's conquerors and who suffered death at their hands, was a contradiction in terms. It

was written in their law: "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" and a Messiah put to death by crucifixion, the most horrible of executions, was to them unthinkable. They did not know of the twelve legions of angels whose swords Jesus might have commanded; they did not see that the chief function of the representative of God was to woo and win men of their own free will to turn from sin to holiness; and that this revolution, the deepest in human history, could be brought about only by suffering love.

Does not the revolutionary character of the Christian revelation overwhelm our imagination? A God who suffers! A Creator, omnipotent and eternal, who will not withdraw the freedom which He gave to His creature, man, even when it is turned against His Son, but will, in love, bear the worst that free men can do to make provision for their salvation and to move them to accept it! We cannot fathom the depths or scale the heights of a love like this.

In all the churches which we visited in Roman Catholic Quebec, we saw the Stations of the Cross, representations in form or colour of the incidents of the Saviour's way to Calvary. In one chapel the figures were the work of a retired business-man, who had finished his life work in the world, and in his closing years added to it his conceptions of the suffering Servant of the Lord. Patriarchal in appearance, with flowing white beard and sensitive fingers, he saw in the blocks of wood that he could buy those features which he was called to bring out for the inspiration of the people. The images of Christ were carved in wood; he must have entered into the Master's humiliation and pain to carve such perfect expressions of them;

and each figure was given a setting peculiarly its own. My thought as I studied them one by one was: This actually happened. The one in whom I live really bore these things for me. The Son of God who went through all this sore abuse and scorn for the redemption of men now lives to make that redemption effective in everyone who will accept Him as Saviour and Lord. Do you wonder that the lives of earth's best have been devoted to reflecting that love into every open heart?

It was not an accident that Christianity is the religion of the Crucified. The Cross is but the culminating expression of a spirit which was characteristic of it throughout. Its peculiar note is Victory through Suffering. An idea like that of Islam, making its way by the sword, was abhorrent to it from the first. Jesus came to be the Messiah of the Jews, but the narratives of the Temptation teach us that, from the very beginning of His career, he stripped off from His conception of Messiahship all that was political, all thought of propagating His claims by force. A new mode of propagating religion was deliberately chosen, and carried through with uncompromising thoroughness. The disciple was not above his Master; and the example which Jesus set in founding His faith by dying for it, was an example which His disciples were called upon to follow into all its logical consequences. Christianity, the true Christianity, carries no arms; it wins its way by lowly service, by patience, by self-sacrifice.

History shows that there are no instruments of religious propaganda comparable to these. It also shows that the type of character connected with them is of the very highest attractiveness and beauty.¹

¹ Prof. W. Sanday, *Outlines of Life of Christ*. T. & T. Clark.

A friend has just sent me a book on the work of the China Inland Mission, and it opens with an account of the ministry and martyrdom of the Rev. Henry Stewart Ferguson in one of its central provinces. His work as an evangelist had the Pauline quality and the Pauline results. After years of service on one of the hardest fields he wrote: "The time is critical. The forces of heathenism are broken beyond recovery. The advantages ought to be followed up. Multitudes are casting away their idols, and know not with what to replace them." His biographer adds: "There is not a city in North Anhwei whose narrow streets did not, at one time or another, resound with the clarion voice of the flaming evangelist calling the people, rich and poor, high and low, to turn from their vanities to the living God." But he did more than this, he expressed Christ in deed as well as in word. He loved men, their bodies as well as their souls, and it grieved his heart to see them suffering the pangs of hunger. So he gave himself to famine relief. Twice he was decorated for his humanitarian service. But he would not consider himself. When imminent danger threatened he was urged to escape while there was time, and he smiled and replied, "Why should I flee? I am an old man and my life is done. It is the same distance to heaven from Shanghai as it is from Cheng-Wang-Kwan." Then the Reds came. His last letter said, "I am in a position of imminent danger. The Reds are advancing rapidly on this city, and are now only sixty li, or twenty miles, distant. I have not yet decided to flee. I am engaged in famine relief work, and have four thousand four hundred dollars in the house for relief purposes.

"If you have not heard of my falling into Red

hands before this reaches you, this need cause you no alarm, for the danger will have passed. If I should fall into Red hands, farewell; for I would not expect to get out alive, except by special dispensation of Providence." The next morning the Reds entered and took him prisoner. Two hundred people of the poorer class kneeled on the cobble stones to plead for the release of the only man in the whole district who, during those awful months of famine, had cared whether they lived or died. They pleaded in vain.

There is a quality which Christ brought into human nature, accepting responsibility for saving men in every way in which they will accept salvation, putting oneself into meeting supreme need without regard to the consequences of oneself, and then finding Christ with him as he walks in Christ's way.

VII

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

PHILIPPIANS 3

IF EVER there was a man with both feet on the ground and his head above the clouds, it was the writer of this chapter. He is writing to his beloved Philippian Church, the keynote of whose life was love, and yet he is aware of discord between certain members of that Church and uses the self-emptying of the Son of God as the ground of his plea for the self-forgetful humility which is essential to unity. It is a common saying that love is blind, but Paul prays that their love may abound in knowledge and in all discernment,¹ and his love for them is the love which claims full development for his spiritual children and can detect the faults which must be removed if completeness is ever to be attained even in Christ.

Paul has had many proofs of their love and loyalty to himself, but he knows that they are in danger of being turned from the Christianity for which he stands by two types of moral heresy, opposites in character, but one in their baneful influence on the soul. They were the fanatical Jew who makes obedience to law the essence of religion and the Antinomian who rejects law altogether and recognizes no authority but the impulses of human nature. He warns them against the first in verse 2: "Watch out for the dogs, watch out

¹ Philippians 1:9.

for the evil workers”—we would call them “bad actors”—“Watch out for those who mutilate the flesh.” Then he adds: “We are the true circumcision who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh”—the very essence of Christianity according to Christ. At the opposite extreme are the lawless, a type which often appears where salvation is offered as God’s answer to faith alone, men who follow the impulses and desires of their lower nature and value nothing but what ministers to the flesh.¹ Never was that warning more in point than now. Both these extremes are deadly. Salvation is by faith alone and not by the works of the law, but faith is that personal trust which commits us to Christ and His type of life forever.

This third chapter stands by itself and is complete in itself. If you leave it out altogether and read the first verse of the fourth chapter immediately after the last verse of the second chapter you will find the connection smoother than between chapter 2:30 and 3:1. I am not going to weary you with the different explanations given of this fact but want you to notice that Philippians 3 stands in its own right, and it is as literary unit as well as a spiritual unity that I bring it before you.

The heart of the chapter is found in verses 8 to 11, particularly in the phrase: “That I may know Him.” What does it mean to *know Christ* in the sense of this verse? It was not merely to know all about Christ, facts that might be learned from those who followed him in the days of His flesh, what He did, taught,

¹ Verses 18-19.

suffered, and won; one might have full knowledge of these facts, as we know the life-story of Winston Churchill, without presuming to claim that we know him personally. Knowing Christ in the sense of personal acquaintance involves personal contact, personal acceptance of each other, and a personal relationship established once for all, something deeper and more intimate and compelling than acquaintance between man and man. That sharp personal encounter with the Risen Christ on the Damascus Road brought Christ into Paul's life and Paul into Christ's in this decisive fashion. In that single glance, which blinded his eyes and overwhelmed his imagination with its ineffable glory, Paul learned more about God than the studies of years had taught him. It is always harder to unlearn error than to learn truth, but under that heavenly light Paul unlearned simultaneously the ideas of God on which he had based his actions, and accepted without any reservation God as God's Son now represented Him. As he put it long afterward in II Corinthians 4:6: "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

This will give us an idea of what Paul already knew of Christ. He was interested in all the things about Jesus which earlier disciples could tell him, but that interest grew out of what he had seen for himself in the glorified Christ.

That appearance of Christ revealed in a flash that God is accessible through Christ¹ and, not only access-

¹ Ephesians 2:18.

ible, but seeking personal relationship with men. When He finds us, He lifts us into a union of love, a love which penetrates into the secrets of the soul and changes everything it touches into its own nature. He saw, too, that this love recognized no racial barriers or boundaries—this had been the issue between Saul of Tarsus and the man of Nazareth. In Jesus glorified he saw universal love on the throne, and at once answered: Since that is what God is, it commands my life, my soul, my all.

With this he discovered Christ's amazing forgiveness which refused to reckon against him his bitter hate, but offered him freely pardon and comradeship. In that light he saw God glorified more, a thousand times more, by turning a sinner against his sin than by punishing him for his sin. More amazing still, Christ enthroned offered the repentant persecutor a position of trust in His service and a commission to tell the world what he had discovered in God. It is not merely that Christ calls on you to trust Him; He trusts you with the most sacred interests of His Kingdom and needs you for the advancement of those interests. Then in carrying out that commission he found Christ with him, pouring through him His energies as Creator to create men anew. The living Saviour was a presence in the depths of Paul's conscious being, active in him and working through him so that he could describe Christ's spirit in terms of power when first he put pen to paper.¹

Paul knew all that when he was writing this letter, but here, as nowhere else, much always wants more. Glover says, "Paul knows more of Jesus every year";

¹ Thessalonians 1:5.

well, if we want to know as much as he can tell us of what and how he learned in the years that followed, read Colossians and Ephesians with the writer's conception of the cosmic Christ through whom all things were made and the crown of whose creative activity was creating men anew.¹

Here is the characteristic feature of this man's religious aspirations: He wanted to know in order to attain. When he saw love world-wide in its scope enthroned in the person of Christ, he promptly put his life into proclaiming that fact to every nation. When he felt the warmth of Christ's forgiving love, he became the ambassador of Christ's reconciliation to a race alienated from God. Even the astounding revelation of Colossians 1:15-18 that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, by whom all things were created and are held together has its bearing on the believer's spiritual condition. In Colossians 2:9-10 we read: "In Him dwells the whole fullness of Deity bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in Him." So that when an enthusiastic young evangelist put his experience of God thus, "I am filled with all the fullness of God," he did not go beyond Paul's claim for his converts here and in Ephesians 3:19. "That you may be filled with all the fullness of God." An original and rather explosive thinker in our Church once burst out with this, "All that Christ received from God He held in our interests and in order to convey it to us." An eager young preacher commented, "If that is so, it changes the course of my ministry." It is so, and it makes all things new for everyone.

¹ Colossians 1:15-20.

Do you wonder that a man with this consciousness could say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ?"

Do not forget that Saul of Tarsus inherited and appropriated the highest religious privileges known to man before Christ came. He says here in effect: If these Jewish Christians boast of their advantages as such, I can surpass them all. I too received in infancy the seal of admission to God's covenant with Abraham; I too belong to the Chosen People and to a tribe of Israel noted for its daring; I am a Hebrew, my record unsullied by compromises with the Gentile world; I too was pledged to obedience to the law of Moses, and surpassed them all in zeal for its observance and defence; in fact, in my zeal I went so far as to persecute those who differed from me. It was this ironclad sureness of his position that brought about the crisis whose outcome was his present passion for Christ. Do the young people of our time realize how much richer their religious privileges are than those which Paul enumerates? Christian homes, parents whose lives were dominated by the spirit of Jesus, the open Bible, the Church with her heavenly gifts and graces, careful instruction in divine truth and the divine way of life, all these and a thousand other privileges have been ours. If Christ comes to us through them as a personal experience and possession, they will be an equipment for a life of service; if the living Christ fails to possess our hearts they will turn sour and become an offence to all around us. Anyone whose soul is not dominated by the love of Christ and whose mind is closed to what other people discover in God through Christ, may be, as Paul was, so zealous that he burns himself up, but until he comes to the point where he can count all

things loss for Christ, he has failed to catch the spirit of the One whom he professes to adore.

Paul renounced all these things for certain objects. The first was, "That I may gain Christ." It is true that we are Christ's; it is also gloriously true that He is ours. When Thomas exclaimed, as he recognized the Risen Jesus, "My Lord and My God," he expressed a consciousness of possession which meant that his supreme need was met by One who was his forever.

Next, Paul says: I suffered the loss of all of these privileges that I might "Be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on Faith." The righteousness which he had striven so hard to acquire God offered as a free gift; his part was to accept it as such, turning away from his painful efforts at self-justification to a God who can be counted on to be as good as His word. As we shall see in a later study, Paul had a vivid sense of the certainty of judgment, and his one desire is to be found in Christ when he stands before God's judgment seat. That phrase "in Christ" is found one hundred and sixty-four times in Paul's writings, expressing our solidarity with the Redeemer in His redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. "In Him we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." "In Him we are built into a spiritual temple for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." Blessed Lord and only Saviour, there is no hope for me but in Thee.

This comes to the one who can never be reconciled to his own past, to the man of unsullied reputation who feels, nevertheless, condemned because he has

never succeeded in reaching his ideal, as well as to the man of blood-red guilt who has behind him wrongs which can never be righted. Paul stands in both these categories, because no man ever tried harder than he did to acquire a righteousness on which God could look with approval and no man ever failed more completely to satisfy even his own conscience. An edge was given to his unrest by the fact that in the effort to please God he had stained his hands with the blood of the martyr, Stephen. Then Christ entered his life, and, when the first surprise was over, he awoke to the fact that both needs had been met by that incoming. His sense of guilt was gone; he knew in his own soul that "forgiveness in the Christian life is forgiveness with the Forgiver in it," and that "we meet God in the forgiveness of sins." Then Christ, in whom he now stood before God, shared with him His own victory over sin, so that thereafter the things he wanted to do he could do, and the things he detested he was able to avoid. This new standing and condition so thrilled him that he exclaimed in ecstasy, "It is God who justifies; who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yet, rather, who is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God and who ever makes intercessions for us." This same Christ stands ready to replace your self-condemnation with His justification and your black record with His shining achievement of obedience to the holy will of God. But you must identify yourself with the Redeemer by a living faith; "between the two great facts of redemption and salvation, faith is the absolutely indispensable connecting link." Once, when living in Vancouver, my wife and I took some friends from Scotland to visit Capilano Canyon, to us one of

nature's wonders. Our first stop was at the swing bridge, a construction stretched on steel ropes across the lower part of the canyon, so strong that hundreds passed over it daily in safety and so sensitive that a puppy trotting from one end sent waves of rhythmic motion right across to the other. We prized it most of all because it led to a path up the river to the second canyon whose heights and depths alternately appal and delight the beholder.

But one of our friends was afraid to venture on the bridge. We told him about its strength and the points to be reached by that path alone, but no! he said he knew all that, but he had had a fright in the Alps which made it impossible for him to look into such depths, and he wouldn't set foot on the bridge. By yielding to his timidity he shut himself out from the most marvellous view of towering cliff and yawning chasm that it has ever been my privilege to enjoy.

You believe in the Son of God and in the redemption God wrought out through Him. You know that millions in every age have been changed and glorified by Him. Now add to your faith entrustment. No matter how divine the nature of this redemption or how miraculous its working, it cannot avail for you until you commit yourself to its author. Then when you venture on Him, venture wholly, you will discover that "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

The next type interested in this confession is the person who feels that his entire life is unsatisfactory. He is not wicked, but at every point he feels that he has

fallen short. "I started out with such high ideals," he acknowledges, "and look at this record!" An answer to this longing for success in what counts most for every individual, namely, what he is to become in Christ, is given in the next verse before us. Paul wants to know Christ "in the power of His resurrection." The Spirit who came upon Jesus at His Baptism was released for the world by His passion and resurrection, and from Him communicated to His Church at Pentecost. Christ's conquering might is imparted to the morally impotent who accepts His redemption. Paul in Romans 7 gives us a picture of the moral helplessness of the man whose life Christ does not control; the same Paul in Romans 8:3 says that what the law could not do, God did, and the object of God's intervention by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin was that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. A gleam of hope is found here for the man convicted of moral failure. I have had earnest people say to me times without number, "I have no doubt about Christ's forgiveness and would gladly accept it if afterward I could live consistently according to my faith and profession." The Risen Christ can prevail in you if in utter sincerity you put yourself into His hands. When your repentance and self-committal goes down to the roots of your being, you too will discover Him anew "in the power of His resurrection."

The same apostle could write on another occasion, "He who poured His energies through Peter to the evangelization of the Jews, also poured His energies through me to the evangelization of the Gentiles."¹

¹ Galatians 2:8.

Here the Christ, in the power of His resurrection, meets the need of the Christian worker who feels that he is accomplishing nothing and getting nowhere by his sacrifices and efforts. The real work of grace only God can do. We are His instruments only; He works through our testimony and teaching even when we are least conscious of it.

Power is now the dominant note in science, statesmanship and personal ambition, and it ought to be so in religion. The One who vanquished sin and death puts at our disposal the fruits of His victory, and comes to us to work in us His perfect will.

In the fellowship of His sufferings the apostle wants to know His Lord. We shall treat this more at length, in the next chapter, but in the meantime note its place in the apostle's aspiration. When Paul was stoned in Lystra, beaten and put in the stocks in Philippi, and hunted out of Thessalonica and Berea, he was sharing Christ's sufferings, because they were inflicted by those whom he sought to save because he sought to save them. Every such humiliation borne in Christ's spirit taught him more about Christ's nature. Here is the strange feature of the situation. Christ the enthroned is able to deliver His servant out of the hands of his enemies; in Corinth He stood by Paul and promised to protect him from injury through the furious riots which greeted him there¹; but ordinarily He asked His servants to suffer with Him because suffering for the sake of saving men was the most effective instrument in God's hands for the redemption of His chosen. Christ hallows thereby the vast field of suffering, making all undeserved pain an occasion for the mani-

¹ Acts 18:9-10.

festation of His spirit and a testimony irresistible to His power and grace in the believer's soul.

Not by the wine drunk but by the wine poured forth;
Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice
And whoso suffers most has most to give.

Have you ever noticed the resemblance and the contrast between verses 5 and 6 and verses 12 to 14 in our chapter? Before Christ came into Paul's life he had toiled untiringly through the years to acquire a righteousness which God could accept, and nothing had happened. After Christ took command of his soul he found that he had to accept as a free gift the righteousness which he had tried to achieve by his own efforts. Then, having accepted this righteousness with the unreserve which we have just been describing, he threw the same energy into working that salvation out into all its implications in actual experience. The language of intense effort rises to his lips, "I press on" or, "I pursue," the same word with which he described his persecutions of the Church. His object is: That I may take hold of that for which Christ took hold of me. He puts all he has into the effort to realize Christ's design in his character and career.

The interest here is in what God was making of Paul rather than in what God was doing through him. Now God was doing through Paul more than He ever did through a man before or since, but He was also working out a design in Paul's own character, and everything Paul did for Christ had its reflex influence on Paul himself. In everything that comes his way he

is working with Christ toward the completing of Christ's ideal for him.

We are aiming at high achievement in the Church and the world, but how about our own personal condition? What we are or become means more to God than anything we say or do, yet many of us give neither time nor thought to it. We think it the manly thing to do our work without thinking of ourselves, forgetting that we must be fit for our work in order to do it.

When I want an illustration of the spirit Paul put into his training I recall a journey from New York to Hamilton the night of the famous snow storm two years ago, the storm which blocked everything in Toronto with snow-drifts mountains high. The day before, the east wind had whipped into New York from the Atlantic with increasing fury. Every hour we expected the snow-storm to break, but it held off, and our train pulled out of New York on time. I awakened just after we left Albany to hear the grind of snow under the wheels and the roar of the wind above the rumble of the train. I had lived among railroad men and had often heard them describe what they had to face in a night like that, and I, in the comfort of the Pullman, could not but think of that engine-driver in front driving that train through the raging elements which fought him every mile of the way, drifts on the track, the glare of the headlight thrown back by whirling snow, discomfort in every move, and danger lurking round every turn, past Syracuse, through Rochester and on to Buffalo, then over the Niagara, and on to the plain beyond with that hour always before him when he was expected to pull that train

into Hamilton. He didn't quite make it, but we were only half an hour late. Only a man who had been trained in character and skill for years and who knew his engine and his road and his duty could have brought us through.

Paul, harassed by persecution, the light of his testimony thrown back by driving storms of hate, attacked often by men without the faintest idea of what it was all about, and still oftener by men who knew too well what it was all about since it struck at their unlawful gains, distressed by bodily infirmities, poor, toil-worn, hungry and cold, pressed undauntedly toward the realization of Christ's dream for him. The elements might roar and the heathen rage, but nothing could turn him aside from the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He didn't quite make it either; note the word "not as though I had already attained," but as we look at him through the mist of the years we see that Christ's greatest miracle was what He made of Paul.

God has a design in your life as really as the builder has the architect's plan for the building on which he is working and to work it out calls for a supreme effort. So Paul uses the language of the race track; like the runner on the home stretch he forgets what is behind and strains forward to the goal ahead for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Behind your life is God's decree and it cannot fail, but the more human cooperation that He can get, the finer the result will be. God is not working with stone or mortar which can only lie passive in His hands, but with a living person whose consent and active participation are factors counted on in His grand design. You

cannot save yourself by good works, but, having been saved by God's free grace, a divine passion seizes you to realize in action all the potentialities of your new standing in Christ.

The object of all this is to attain the resurrection of the dead. Dr. L. P. Jacks has written that when, after fifty years desultory Bible study, he concentrated on searching out the central truth of the New Testament, he found it in immortality. By this he did not mean mere survival, but a vital union with Christ which lasts forever. In verse 11 Paul confesses that the object of his struggle is "that if possible I may attain the resurrection of the dead." Then in verses 20 to 21 he continues, "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." The point of the passage is that resurrection is the culmination of life here in conscious union with the living Christ. The resurrection of the dead will not be a sudden break-in of divine power reversing, or bursting through God's regular processes; it will be the outcome of what was made possible by the Incarnation of the Son of God and steadily worked out through the generations. Resurrection will be the crown of redemption, the height attainable by a divine life already ours. John 11:25-26 is thoroughly characteristic of Jesus' teachings in the fourth Gospel—the resurrection is just mentioned and then passed by that stress may be laid on the life which it crowns. This present life in Christ

is so important in the light of its present quality as well as of its future glory that it draws to itself all the believer's attention.

Within the Christian fellowship and for the Christian disciple, there is no other gospel; Crucifixion—Resurrection; the Cross—Easter; the two events are one in the economy of God, for it is the figure on the Cross that cries across the world, "Behold, I am alive forevermore," and it is the word of the Cross that is the power of God, and the glory which men beheld.

Easter day breaks!

Christ rises! Mercy every way is infinite.

VIII

MR. GREATHEART DISCLOSES THE SECRET OF HIS VALOUR

II CORINTHIANS 4:1 to 5:21

OUR SUBJECT is: Mr. Greatheart discloses the secret of his valour. In these chapters Paul opens up the secret springs of his endurance and zeal. In Bunyan's allegory Mr. Greatheart's sword was always drawn for the defence of the defenceless; helplessness roused him to action because that was what his strength was for. With most of us it takes desperation to drive us to Christ; Paul always referred everything that entered his life to his living Lord, but under a pressure of affliction which seemed not only undeserved but purposeless, he found a door opened into the secret place of the Most High which he had never noticed before, and which admitted him to a union with Christ in suffering more intimate and more vitalizing than his cooperation with his Lord in action had ever been. Out of this beatific vision he came with a new fortitude and rekindled earnestness. Paul's favourite phrase is "In Christ"; here we see him identified with Christ in all his interests and serving Christ's interests in all his actions, and able to serve more effectively because of the deeper union with Christ into which his suffering had brought him.

The thought of chapters four and five of second Corinthians is a vital unity, and the division between the chapters has kept many from recognizing the full majesty of Paul's faith and the new impetus which his new experiences gave to his evangelizing activities. Chapter 4:16-18 expresses a bright expectancy; chapter 5:1-6 tells us what it was that Paul expected. He regards his many afflictions as light because of the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and unfading" into which they lead him. His sense of the glory of eternal life "In Christ" intensifies his anxiety for the salvation of those to whom Christ has sent him.

These chapters spring out of two facts which Luke ignores in his history of Paul's mission in Ephesus: the first, the violence of the persecution which he suffered from the enemies of the Gospel, and second, the virulence of the attacks on Paul's motives and methods by his Jewish-Christian critics. The little we know of both these factors in the situation we have to infer from incidental references in the epistles; the one thing that is clear is how deeply they wounded the apostle. An echo of the first of these we hear in II Corinthians 1:8-10:

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death; but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead; he delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us; on him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

In I Corinthians 15:30-32 we read:

Why am I in peril every hour? I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?

Whether this is figurative, or whether Paul actually had to fight for his life with wild beasts in the arena, we do not know. What is clear is his peril, and his assurance that earth's worst could only lead to heaven's best. The hatred and the persecutions which dogged his steps had apparently grown fiercer in the interval between the two letters; it had come to a head in some outbreak of unprecedented fury, and after his enemies had failed to kill him, they had continued to harass him so that he was still in danger. God was his only hope.

He was wounded still more deeply by attacks from within the Church. The men who had caused the difficulty in Galatia and whose designs he had exposed and frustrated, had evidently pursued him into Corinth, had denied his apostleship, had ridiculed his appearance and his speech, and, worst of all, had denounced his Gospel. To us it is inconceivable that Christian men could find it in their hearts to misrepresent and malign so devoted and powerful a missionary and that among his own spiritual children, but this they did with poisoned minds and tongues. His principles and his Gospel he defended with vigour, but the personal criticisms and lampoons left him with an inferiority complex which comes out in phrase after phrase, and turns him to Christ as his only consola-

tion. His bodily presence may be weak and his speech contemptible, but still he is an ambassador for Christ through whom God pleads with men.

Paul uses his sufferings in Ephesus as a symbol and suggestion of the unmeasured and immeasurable mass of human suffering with which God has to deal, a world of misery whose sighs and cries are ceaselessly rising up to God like the vapours to the sun. Often we lament that our religion is sadly diluted, but if Christian compassion and the modern art of healing had done nothing more than prevent unnecessary pain, the sacrifice and efforts which our faith inspires would be abundantly justified. Notwithstanding all that medical science and skill can do, there is still an incalculable amount of disease among us. We keep it under cover so that the healthy are unaware of its volume, but suffering is always personal, and wherever it appears some individual of priceless worth to Christ's heart is frustrated and denied the fulfilment of his hopes.

Now, first, Paul speaks of bearing the sufferings of Christ. He begins this discussion with a statement which really contains the whole truth of the passage before us: "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too." When he was scourged in Philippi because he had liberated an imprisoned soul, mobbed in Ephesus because the enlightenment of the Gospel was drying up the revenues of idolatry, stoned in Lystra because he had preached a salvation which included people of every race, he was suffering as Christ had suffered, and from the same cause; the people whom

Christ was using him to save had turned against the one who sought their highest good. This type of suffering is found wherever Christianity goes. When I was a lad we heard often of "blood-stained Erromanga;" this was a cannibal island in the South Seas which the Church of the Maritime provinces evangelized. When John Williams landed on its shore he was killed before he could begin his work. The story of his sacrifice fired that little Church to take up Christ's cause in those far off islands, and George N. Gordon of P.E.I. settled among them and in a few months he too was slain. His brother, James, was ploughing when someone ran to him with the news of this new martyrdom, and the story is that he dropped the plow in the furrow, studied to fit himself to take his brother's place, and in due time entered the field and fell. Nothing daunted, young H. A. Robertson dedicated his life to the same tribe, and he found that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church and reaped the harvest from that red seed sowing. That story has been repeated all down the centuries and all over the world; we owe everything we have and hope for to men and women of that spirit; and never has persecution been more resolute and ruthless than in modern Germany and Russia. Job protested to high heaven because he was stricken in spite of his virtue. Jesus' followers were stricken because of their virtue; at any point they could have escaped if they would have renounced Christ, or even kept quiet about Him, but at all cost to themselves they proclaimed Christ, His Cross, His living presence, His salvation. The persistence of Christianity is due to their persistence in keeping Christ before men; consequently we regard

their sufferings as the sufferings of Christ for a lost world. Dr. A. E. Armstrong raises this question: Are we, the descendants of those pioneers, resting on our oars, boasting of our Church's past and failing to push to its consummation the enterprises on which they embarked? These are the only conquerors whom posterity will remember with honour. They vanquished the enemy within before they encountered Christ's enemies in the field, or, rather, they let Christ conquer first in them, and then through them, and in the process became His heroes for the inspiration of mankind.

They only the victory win,
Who have fought the good fight, and have vanquished the
demon that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that
the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight,—
if need be, to die.
Speak, History! Who are Life's victors? Unroll thy long
annals and say,
Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won
the success of a day?
The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans, who fell at Ther-
mopylae's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate
or Christ?¹

This suffering, however, heroic as it has been, is but a small part of the suffering of mankind. Many who are joining in this morning's Service are in weakness and pain. The message of this passage is that their sufferings also may become the sufferings of Christ for

¹ William Wetmore Story, *Io Victis*.

His world, and that by bearing them in His spirit they may walk with Him. For a far larger proportion of our people than we realize, this world has nothing. Some have been stricken down by disease and know that recovery is impossible. Many have lived out their allotted span, and know that even if they lived on, senility and dependence is all that lies ahead. Just lately I have had a number of people forbid me to pray for their recovery. Another, whose mind was as clear and strong as any in the land, said to me, "My life work is done. What is there for me here even if I could get better?" Now the message of this passage is that all such suffering is for the Christian not an accident nor a failure on God's part; it is a divine appointment and a divine opportunity. It is an opportunity for Christ to reveal in you what He can do in the soul that is open to Him; it is an opportunity for you to discover more in Him. The grain of sand inside the oyster shell brings the pearl out of the oyster's nature; the woes of earth Christ will make the occasion for the cultivation of graces which otherwise could never have appeared in the soul.

How does the believer meet these trials? The answer which covers everything is that it is through his connection with his exalted Lord. Everything is possible in Christ. But Paul is not content with a generality, not even with a divine generalization; he goes into particulars.

First, this earthly, or earthy, body has heavenly functions. It is only an earthenware vessel, but it contains gems of priceless worth. It is nothing but mortal flesh, perishable in its nature, but Jesus' immortal life is being manifested in it. It is a tent which

the occupant may strike any day and move on, but it will be replaced by a house built on foundations which will stand forever. It is the body of our humiliation, but Christ will transform it into the likeness of His glorious body.

Our poets have delighted to set forth the contrast between the spirit within and its earthly habitation, and to assure the soul of an abode worthy of its divine nature.

The fiery soul which, working out its way,
Fretted the pygmy body to decay.

—DRYDEN

The soul uneasy and confined from home
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

—POPE

Here is the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.

—MONTGOMERY

This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian
Whose portals men call death.

—LONGFELLOW

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why:
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

—TENNYSON

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
 Lets in new light through chinks that Time hath made:
 Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
 As they draw near to their eternal home.

Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view
 That stand upon the threshold of the new.

—EDMUND WALLER

Or, better still:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
 While the swift seasons roll;
 Leave thy low vaulted past,
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Hide thee from heaven by a dome more vast
 Till thou at last art free,
 Leaving thine outworn shell by Life's unresting sea.

—O. W. HOLMES

This being our nature and destiny, we need never be overcome by calamity. There is a fine Christian stoicism in the spirit with which Paul has met the worst: "We are harried on every side, yet not hemmed in; baffled, but not broken; persecuted, but not abandoned; knocked down but not knocked out." Somewhere back in my memory is a verse of an old ballad describing a captain's appeal to his men when he was struck down in battle and feared lest his fall should daunt his followers:

Fight on! fight on! my bonny men!
 I may be hurt but am not slain:
 I'll lay me down and bleed a while,
 And then I'll rise and fight again.

The Christian's spirit must be more resolute than this because of the divine Paraclete at his side and in his soul.

A reason for confidence in the outcome of even the worst situation is Paul's oneness with Christ in all His experiences. His aim is to go through all that Christ went through in order to attain to Christ's condition, "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies." Note that it is not death as we understand it but the dying of the old body that he is speaking of, the process by which its connection is broken with the elements of its worldly life. I have often seen the top branches of a poplar die while the lower branches still lived; it shows that decay had set in and the connection of those branches with the elements by which they lived was broken. So the believer's old connections with the worldly are gradually being broken and will ultimately disappear altogether.

This is a favourite thought of Paul's as readers of Romans 6 will recall. He states it more clearly in the 14th and 15th verses of the chapter before us: "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised." That is, we die to sin with Christ, and the core of all sin is the old self-assertion which must be crucified with Christ in order that the divine life in us may be given its opportunity. This is where our illustration of the tree fails, because the dying of its upper branches means that the tree itself is on its way to death, while the drying up of our

worldly connections here means the releasing of our spiritual life for its full growth and fruitfulness.

So often we older folk complain that we are gradually being closed off from the activities and enjoyments of earlier years; we fail to see that the energies of the soul, which age does not dry up, blocked in one direction are turned into another, and in that other direction they flow into the shining sea.

But it is the old self that must be done to death. Right at the heart of all our difficulties, national as well as personal, is selfishness, the threat to-day to free institutions the world over, and blocking at every point the recovery for which we pray. The only change by which the world can live takes place in the believer's soul because if any man be in Christ there is a new creation. It is a root idea in this whole passage that the work of Christ began a new era in human life and human relationships and the character of this new era will be unselfish devotion to the best in our fellow men.

If we die in Christ to all that is inconsistent with Christ-likeness, we shall also rise with him. We must not separate in our study verses 16 to 18 from 4:14 and the opening of chapter 5.

Imagine a man who, in pursuance of a heavenly calling, has been stoned and left for dead, a landsman with a landsman's fear of the sea thrice shipwrecked and drifting for a night and a day on the deep, beaten and jailed again and again, working for months with the sword hanging over his head by a hair, imagine him speaking of his afflictions as slight and momentary! How can he, still wearing his scars? Because of the glory of the destiny to which they led. He had seen

with his own eyes the Risen Jesus in the splendour of his exaltation; he knows that He who raised up Jesus will also raise up those who follow Jesus and bring them into His presence. He knows that if the flimsy tent in which he now resides is destroyed, a new building will be provided for him, eternal in the heavens. He knows that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and for him this is heaven.

We are continually inquiring into what happens to friends who pass from us into the unseen. Once when we were driving home after the funeral of an uncle, father, ordinarily the most silent of men, startled us with the remark, "So Hugh now knows the great secret." What was it that he discovered when he disappeared from our sight behind the veil? What shall we see when the veil, which has grown so thin with age that the light shines through, is lifted and we enter the immediate presence of God?

Paul does not paint for us any picture of the future state; the nearest he comes to it is his quotation, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him," but here are the things he lives by and lives for. Death cannot interrupt either life or love. His union with Christ holds through death into the eternal. His hope of immortality is based, not on any life-principle in human nature, but on the love of God, who can be counted on to keep all that we entrust to him against that day. Death can only bring the believer into clearer, closer union with Christ than is possible here; "the life of faith is less intimate than the life of sight and converse." "To depart is to be with

Christ, which is far better.”¹ It is a great change for the better. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

It is a preacher who writes all this, the preacher of the ages. And he pauses in his description of the glories yet to be to reflect on what it involves. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.” We remember the old story that when Daniel Webster was asked to state the greatest thought that had ever entered his mind, he answered, “The thought of my personal accountability to God.” Everyone must answer to God for everything. “The human individual has to do with a personal God who attends to his case as if there were no other in the universe.” As a thinker of ancient days puts it, “There will be exact correspondence between action and requital.”

Now, an essential element in the Christian Gospel is “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”² How can the man who preached this to every sinner whom he could reach also maintain that in the great Assize every person will be dealt with by God according to what he has done? Jesus’ answer is quoted in John 5:24: “He who hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” Whatever the judgment may mean, it cannot mean that the believer’s salvation will ever be called in question. He who believes on the Son has eternal

¹ Philippians 1:23.

² 1 Corinthians 15:3.

life;¹ it is a present possession. The use that he has made of the entrusted talents must be answered for, but, according to the judgment scene in Matthew 25: 31-46, the division between the sheep and the goats is made according to their nature before the judgment begins. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," and remains eternally so.

What of those who have never known this change? The preacher in whom Christ's spirit dwells cannot be content with his own salvation while his neighbours perish. The love of the Christ who died for all constrains him to strive for their salvation; "knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord we persuade men." "We pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." God pleads with you through us. He recognizes your lost condition but He made His Son, who knew no sin, to be sin for you sinners that you might become the righteousness of God in Him—a tremendous statement, the height and depth of whose meaning the mind of the men concerned cannot fathom. Let us rest our study at this point. Life, yes, glorious life provided for all, and the Lover who made the provision pleads with you to accept it.

¹ John 3:36.

IX

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

A STUDY OF ROMANS 8

IF I can make Romans 8 one of our spiritual treasures this service will be memorable all our days. It is a song of triumph from beginning to end, God's triumph in human nature. It is the most optimistic passage in the world's literature, and the basis of its optimism is what God has done, is doing, and will do for our salvation. At the same time it is not mere wishful thinking; it deals frankly with the ugly facts of life and suggests how their ugliness may be changed into beauty. It contains the essence of the truth expounded in the previous chapters of the epistle, and it adds to the doctrine of salvation from sin the victory of the Spirit over every element and influence which hinders the perfecting of God's design in us. Throughout its theme is Christ's part in the establishment of His Kingdom in men and through men.

The first section of the chapter, verses 1-4, sets forth the divine solution of Paul's twin problem; His moral responsibility and his moral impotence. His past transgressions and failures had put him in the wrong before a righteous God, and there was nothing he could do about it; he could neither atone for the past nor meet God's requirements in the future. Condemned by his

conscience and his spirit frustrated in its aspirations by his flesh, his despair was deepened by his discovery that God's law, holy and just and good in itself, could only provoke his perverse human nature into more active rebellion.¹ This twin problem, his conviction of guilt and his sense of failure, was solved for him and for all by God's "sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," *i.e.*, by the Incarnation, "and for sin," *i.e.*, by the atonement, and sin thus condemned in the flesh is ruled out of the life of him "who walks not according to the flesh but according to the spirit."

Life in the Spirit of Christ is, therefore, the key truth of the chapter. Look at phrases like these: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God," "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him," "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through His Spirit which dwells in you." The first effect of Christ's redemption is the cancelling of the condemnation under which we lay; the second effect is the gift of His spirit. From beginning to end of the New Testament it is assumed that those spiritually renewed by the divine Spirit are possessed by that spirit, and that while the life of God in a world of men will require all that the man can do for himself, he will be conscious all through that God is working in him to will and to do of His good pleasure."² The New Testament ideal is an alliance between the human spirit and the divine. The spirit of Jesus takes

¹ Romans 7:7-12.

² Philippians 2:12-13.

hold of that part of our nature which is akin to God, and so revives it that through it He can bring the whole man into glad conformity with the will of God. He builds on the foundation of what Christ did on Calvary once for all, but, that accepted, He strengthens every Godward inclination and impulse until the will of God becomes our own will, the free choice which is the expression of the change which Christ has wrought in us.

This is for the conscience-stricken in every age: in Christ we may be reconciled to God. Henry Drummond once said that among young men he found the sense of failure keener than the sense of guilt; this passage is aimed to meet that sense of frustration also. It assumes that it is a matter of concern to each of us to become what God designed. Here is provided release from all that holds us down, and the privilege of partnership with the Creator in perfecting in free men what He began by creating us in His own image.

The hinge of the second section of the chapter, verses 5 to 17, is verse 9: "You are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you." But how could anyone who faced reality as frankly as Paul did, say this honestly to those Roman Christians with all their imperfections and limitations? Because Jesus' way of changing character was to take the man as he was in his root conviction and ideal as the real man, even though he had never embodied his principles in action. He saw in Matthew the publican a potential apostle and claimed him on the spot. Zachaeus, whom his fellow-countrymen called a traitor to his race and religion, Jesus called "a son of Abraham"

and promptly brought out qualities which adorn even Abraham's holy name. Pharisaic critics pointed to the bad record of a woman who wept at Jesus' feet, but Jesus' conception of her capacity for love has gone singing down the ages. On the same principle Paul said to these Roman converts, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit" because God had provided for this in Christ and had pledged Himself to perfect His design in everyone who would trust Him.

Here we have the place of his mind in religion. "Be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind," Paul was to write a little later. Character is formed by the mind. What you believe yourself to be you may, you can, become in Christ. It is always through the mind that truth is so assimilated that it becomes character; intellectual belief in God is the foundation for the act of will which commits us to Him. When, therefore, a Roman believer made the truth of this verse his own, he was well on his way to the realization of all that is promised here.

The transforming power of an idea with God in it is what Paul brings before us in Romans 8:9. As I was asking myself what this truth contained for daily living, my eye fell on a bookcase filled with biographies and I saw in it the answer to my question. First, there were the theologians whose doctrines grew out of their personal experience of God: Paul, Augustine, Luther, Bunyan, Wesley and their spiritual descendants down to our own generation, a glorious succession. They were men whose salvation was an experience rather than an achievement, something that they received instead of something that they did. These men were thinkers,

venturesome and vigorous in their interpretations, always ready to challenge the accepted and established, but however wide the range of their thinking, this was always its fixed centre, what God had meant to them and had done for them. Every one of these men felt his nature incomplete without God; to each of them God came as a personal presence with pardoning and cleansing grace; spiritual renewal in all cases meant emancipation from errors, practices and connections antagonistic to the aims of the Spirit. Each of these men had an idea peculiarly his own which it was his mission to work out in the world; Paul the capacity for God in Christ of men of every race; Augustine the grace of God in Christ active in quickening the dead in sin; Luther salvation by grace to be received by faith alone; Bunyan and Wesley redemption through the Crucified immediately effective in answer to faith. Each came under a divine compulsion to carry to all who would hear the good news of what God meant to them and did for them. The results are as amazing as the liberation of spirit which salvation brought; the Gospel lifted out of a narrow, nationalistic setting and shared with the Gentile world; Christian thought inspired and directed for a thousand years; spiritual rebirth brought to northern Europe; the English-speaking world evangelized afresh and imbued with the missionary spirit; the Church of Christ established in every land on earth; each of these movements traceable to a personal rediscovery of God by some individual who could not live without Him.

There were the men who initiated practical movements of world-wide range: Francis of Assisi lifted out of a life of sensuality and vanity by a vision of the

Christ and changed into the most self-denying representative of Christ in the western world; David Livingstone who rescued a continent from the curse of slavery with Schweitzer his successor in greatness as in glory; Shaftesbury and Barnardo in our own time with their love for humanity and especially for children originating always in God's entrance to their conscious being. There were the people whose vision lifted nations into freedom: Joan of Arc directed by divine voices to free her country from the invader; Abraham Lincoln driven into public life by his conviction that the doctrine that all men are created free and equal applied to blacks as well as to whites, and by that passion lifted above the tricks of petty politicians to the most exalted position of his age; Sun Yat-Sen, China's Christian revolutionary, who claimed for his people freedom to develop their powers and resources to the full, and whose influence has only begun. In our own time there have been inspired preachers like D. L. Moody, Charles Spurgeon, Alexander Whyte and J. H. Jowett; scientists like Eddington, Jeans and Thomson, tracing their discoveries to an inspiration which started them in their investigations; prophet voices like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Emerson, with their conceptions of the rights of people; statesmen like Gladstone with his principle of national integrity, Woodrow Wilson with his vision of world government and world order; and then in this generation the champions of national freedom against new forms of tyranny; poets like Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth, Browning, Whittier, Francis Thompson, whose insight into spiritual reality set their harps a-ringing, each inspired soul in all these different departments inspiring successors to carry their contri-

butions to all corners of the earth and to the latest generation. In every case the divine Spirit began by changing the men and women themselves and lifting them out of the flesh into the realm of the ideal, driving them to the development of their powers and making them so truly great that their spiritual quality and their gifts will be magnified by the passing of the years. Then God worked through them toward ends eternal. Look at the multitudes whom they influenced, the movements which they started increasing in weight like an avalanche in its descent, the benefits which they conferred on humanity! Christ lifts the individual above the flesh and into the spirit but never for himself alone; the creative in history reaches out to all men everywhere who can recognize and respond to the call. It gives a new significance to the statement that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ when we see persons possessed by the Spirit of God working with Him in every new creation.

This reaches out to all of us. When we let the Spirit of God have His way with us He enlists us in the army of creators, the God-possessed who make the world new. Don't say that it applies only to the rich, or the great; very ordinary individuals have often changed the character of a church, or a community, because Christ was in them. But you can see from these examples the full significance of this verse, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit if so be that the spirit of Christ dwells in you."

When we turn to the next section, verses 18-25, we find an idea that sounds strange to us in our peaceful and prosperous western world, but surely not so

strange to our fellow Christians in Europe and Asia. It is the place of suffering in Christian experience. It seems to Paul the most natural thing in the world to associate loyalty to Christ with suffering and to magnify the combination as the prelude to glory. It is one of the seed truths of the New Testament that if we suffer with Christ we shall reign with Him, but if we shrink from the suffering that loyalty to Him brings on us we deny Him, and then He cannot but deny us.

The sufferings of Christians are of two kinds. In common with all men we must bear the ills that flesh is heir to, disease, accident, the injuries due to man's inhumanity to man, the shipwrecks caused by storms on the sea of life, defeat in the struggle for success, and death at the end of it all. Then there are the sufferings brought on us by undeviating loyalty to Christ from men who hate all that He stands for and are determined to persist in sin. Persecution is at the back of Paul's mind, and this every convert was warned to expect.

The striking feature of the passage is that the writer lumps them all together as evils which we share with nature, and which may be the birth-pangs of our own and nature's redemption. Note the strange connection between verse 18 and verse 19: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." At this point Paul is heir to a noble Hebrew tradition. Man and nature are one. Man is the crown of creation and cannot be separated from the realm that he rules. When man sinned all nature suffered. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake

was the divine response to man's disobedience."¹ Nature's possibilities can never find fulfilment apart from man's restoration. You have but to observe the cruelty of man's treatment of the lower animals, or the miseries that birds and beasts of prey inflict on their victims, and their suffering from accident and disease to see the meaning of Paul's words, "The whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now." As Edward Caird once remarked, "Nature cannot come to its rights, cannot show its highest meaning until in the life of man it becomes the servant of a higher design." Then when man's redemption is complete the whole creation will share his glory. For example, in Isaiah 65:17 we have the prophecy of the new heaven and the new earth. Then in verses 23 to 25 of the same chapter the prophet describes what this involves:

They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.

Was the prophet just dreaming or was there reality somewhere as the ground for his expectations? For an answer look at what happens all about us even in man's present condition of humiliation. Wherever the soul of man answers to the soul in nature he can raise

¹ Genesis 3:17.

whatever he touches to a perfection that nature apart from mind can never attain. Two lovers of nature built their summer home on a rocky height in Muskoka. There were few trees and shrubs around, and many of those that were there were stunted and scrawny. But these enthusiasts tended every living thing with loving care, set them free from everything that cramped their growth, planted new types wherever they could find a pocket of earth to sustain them, and in a few years you found bower after bower of living green where before there had been desolation.

One Sunday morning I arrived in Edinburgh and went with friends to church. The minister's sermonette to boys and girls was based on his observance of trained sheep dogs in action the day before. He marvelled at the way those animals had been trained to herd the sheep, to find and bring back the straying, and in ways too numerous to mention, to guard and direct the flocks. But years ago some of the same breed of dogs were abandoned in Patagonia and became wild beasts of prey. They were stronger and more intelligent than the wolves native to that district, and raided the flocks so that no enemies were more dreaded by the shepherds than they. Under man's care and direction these animals became guardians of the flock; when nature was left to herself they became the terror of all weaker creatures.

I like horses, and I think that every one I ever owned liked me. But they never liked me the way they loved my brother. He had something which stirred a spirit in them and brought energies into action which otherwise slept. He used to tell me, "There is nothing clearer in my mind than the touch on the lines that will put a horse to the top of his

speed, but I could not explain it to anyone to save my life." Once I bought from him a horse which had been his pet and his pride. I cared for her for over a year and drove her in my own careless way so that she became as careless as her driver. Then he paid us a visit and I invited him out for a drive. As we got clear of the village I said, "Here, you take the driver's seat and try her out for yourself." The minute he touched the lines up went her head. She was ready for a burst of speed of which she was capable only under the master's hand. Now don't tell me that it was cruel to let that fleet-footed beauty rise to the top of her strength and speed under one who could somehow awaken in her a spirit which otherwise could never be brought into action. Those two were one in a superb endeavour, and he brought her home with her head in the air as I had never seen it before.

Isaiah's point is just this, that this success of men, not over nature but with nature, is just a hint of the change which will be brought about in all God's creation when our redemption is complete. Christ was always the Son of God, but it was only by the resurrection from the dead that He was declared to be the Son of God with power.¹ So now, according to John, we are the children of God, but it does not yet appear what we shall be. When that time comes the transformation of nature will come with it and man will find himself in a new world matched with his new condition.

From that point the apostle goes on to deal with that higher union between man and God in which nature cannot participate. When our praying issues

¹ Romans 1:4.

from the depths of our nature the Spirit of God is found praying through us. The yearnings of our spirit linked with the divine Spirit are too deep for words, and only in sighs and exclamations can they find expression. These intercessions are for the fulfilment of the will of the Father in our world. We can feel deeply and dimly what we cannot define of the wonders of grace in God's will for men.¹

This much is clear that "in all things God cooperates for good with them that love Him." Then follows a sweeping survey of the doctrines of grace which set forth the clearest conceptions which our minds can frame of the nature and attitude of God. In the earlier part of the chapter the apostle based his ideas of life in the spirit of Incarnation, the Atonement, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and through that Spirit the resurrection of those whom He possesses. Then he dwelt on the cosmic significance of suffering, and the redemption of nature, whose sufferings we share, as the result of man's redemption. Now he finds our salvation rooted in God's sovereign will, the object of that salvation our conformity to the image of His Son, God's call to each of His chosen giving effect to His choice, His justification of those whom He called as a step toward the glory which the redeemed will share with the Redeemer. Christians were only a few small groups of the unarmed facing the world in arms, but with God on their side who could be against them? When God justifies, who dares condemn? What power in the visible, or invisible, universe can separate them from the love of Him who died for them?

¹ Romans 8:26-27.

God's action is everything to one who trusts Him. Our salvation depends on His hold of us and not on our weak hold of Him. In the practical spirit of our times we make a great deal of favourable conditions for moral development and for the growth of the social virtues; Paul built his hopes on an inward alliance between his spirit and God's Spirit so firm that it was independent of everything external. The world as organized then was the deadly enemy of the spiritual conception of being. Its hostility was such that it would kill rather than tolerate one who stood for the sovereignty of love, and its allurements were more dangerous than its hate. In Paul's eyes the believer was in possession of a spiritual energy which could make every opposing force serve Christ's objects in His people. It turned handicaps into assets; for example, Paul's own thorn in the flesh and the influence of Milton's blindness and adversity on his poetry. It conquered circumstances, and turned unfavourable situations into opportunities for spiritual achievement; witness the flogging and imprisonment of Paul and Silas in Philippi, or the imprisonment of Bishop Berggrav in Norway and Pastor Niemoeller in Germany, and their influence on all who knew them. Persecution aimed at the extermination of Christians was borne in such a spirit that it became a powerful agency for the conversion of the persecutors themselves, as it was in the effect of Stephen's dying testimony on Paul himself, and the rejuvenation which the spirit of the victims of the Boxer uprisings brought to Christianity in China. One always remembers the fifty young men who took their place at the Lord's Table confessing that they owed their first impressions

of Christianity to the sight of young Horace Tracy Pitkin sealing his testimony with his blood. The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the Church as with the French Huguenots, the Italian Waldenses and the Scottish Covenanters, and the harvest from seed-sowing of that character has been produced in every country on earth.

When we see an evil established in our world our first impulse is to organize men of goodwill for its removal, but those early Christians, who initiated the movement which subdued the Roman world to the will of Christ, encountered on every hand evils which they could not remove. Their refusal to submit to violence or to let the hatred of their enemies beget hatred in them, or turn them from their purpose, showed a power in operation mightier far than anything the world could command and in thousands upon thousands of cases love unconquerable won their hearts. The oyster makes the grain of sand which it cannot remove the occasion for the production of a pearl, and so the evils which the Christian spirit cannot remove are made an occasion for the cultivation of graces and for the generating of energies which reveal to the world the resources to be found in Christ and the loveliness which only adversity can cultivate in the soul. Lord Macaulay said that the faith of Cromwell's Ironsides was so strong that they always greeted the sight of the enemy with a shout of stern exultation and came to regard the day of battle as a day of certain victory. The Christian's confidence in Christ is such that He can defy the powers of the air and the princes of darkness and any conceivable created being to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

X

LIFE IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

ROMANS 12

HENRY DRUMMOND has given I Corinthians 13 an exposition in which it shines with the brightness which a good setting always gives to a jewel. Nothing comparable has been done for Romans 12. Yet it is just as original and more comprehensive than Paul's hymn of love. A modern writer does not go beyond the truth when he says that the whole passage is intensely and characteristically Christian.

The key to its meaning is that word "therefore" with which it opens. This refers back to the whole argument of the epistle for free and complete justification by the grace of God accepted by faith alone. Salvation is all of grace. That salvation governs the whole of life, penetrates to its inmost recesses, and reaches out to its widest relationships. The deliverance it brings from the burden of guilt issues in emancipation from the dominion of sin, and freedom from its domination carries with it the conquest of everything in the world that can assail the soul or impede its progress. Now, since all this has been done for you, work it out into all your relationships. Put into effect the truths and principles of the Christian revelation in everything controlled by your will. Illustrate in action what you have found in God. Give over your inner

self to God, and then, in your associations and dealings with others, be Christian through and through.

To catch the full significance of these injunctions we must take into account the world in which these Roman Christians were living. Their home was imperial Rome, the centre of world empire. Roman authority was upheld by her legions; government by consent of the governed was an ideal that never entered their heads. Repression, vengeance to the farthest reach of cruelty for every revolt, the rights of the subdued never considered as against the interests of the ruling power or the whims of the rulers, characterized their treatment of the conquered. Roman law was an advance on anything known before, but its benefits were reserved for her citizens. Slaves and subject races were below its jurisdiction. Roman ideals of manhood corresponded with their ideals of empire; virtue meant valour, or the strength of manhood behind valour. The man who could assert himself against the world and give back to an enemy more than the enemy could give to him was their ideal. Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play, before whom the world trembled, over against Brutus, the unpractical idealist, is the embodiment of the Roman ideal in personal and public life.

In direct contradiction of that spirit, Paul places the Christ spirit of Romans 12. We cannot imagine a sharper break. Generally the people from whom we are descended and those with whom we live and work furnish us with our ideas; here, without mentioning the world around the Church, the attention of Roman Christians is turned to God as revealed in his Son, and

they are told to draw their principles and their spirit and their aims from Him. It is not merely a life God-governed, as we understand it; it is a life God-inhabited through which God expresses Himself in its whole bearing among men.

The more we think about the world as it was then, the more astounded we are at the originality of Jesus of Nazareth from whom, directly or indirectly, all this comes. To encounter violence with love, to turn men from that violence by patient endurance, to recognize that men are no good to God unless they choose Him of their own free will, and then literally to bear the worst that men could do to Him in answer to His love in order to win them to acceptance of that love, was an idea so new and strange that the human mind has never been able to take it in. We talk about Jesus' faith in God, and it has never been equalled, but this is His faith in man. He believed that man, even at his worst, was capable of responding to this spirit, and He staked on it His life and the mission in which His life was invested. The nations are not yet ready to base their treatment of one another on this principle, but in their heart of hearts they realize that, man's spirit being what it is, nothing else will work. But whatever the nations do, Christ calls His Church to follow Him, and "to fill up that which is lacking of His sufferings for His body's sake." When Hebrew Christians shrank under persecution, their teacher wrote, "Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself." Why did He, the all-powerful, endure it? Because that was the only way to turn men from sin to God.

He might have reared a palace at his word
Who sometime had not where to lay his head;
Time was when he who fed the crowds with bread
Would not one crust until himself afford.
Twelve legions, girded with angelic sword,
Were at his back, the scorned and buffeted;
He healed another's scratch, his own side bled,
Side, feet and hands with cruel piercings gored.
O wonderful the wonders left undone!
And scarce less wonderful than those he wrought!
O love divine, passing all human thought,
To have all power, yet be as having none.
O self-effacing love that thought alone
For others' needs, but never for his own.¹

Our chapter opens with an affectionate appeal for complete self-commitment to God (vs. 1-2). The writer calls for a definite act—"present your bodies a living sacrifice"—followed by a process of working out God's will in us. Progress in Christian living must begin in an acceptance of Christ with all that is involved in His will for us, a decision which is definite and final. From that fixed point we go on to take hold of that for which Christ took hold of us, (Philippians 3:12), as the experience of the years unfolds His design in us. There is no patchwork in the New Testament ideal; the centre of our conscious being is to be open to the spirit of Jesus, and from His throne in the heart He extends His sovereignty outward until it covers all life's goings and doings. Obedience to the will of God is not to be a matter of external corrections, lopping off this bad habit and righting that particular wrong; one's nature in its entirety must be given over to

¹ Archbishop R. C. Trench, *Sonnets*.

Christ who will, in the individual as in the world, subdue all things unto Himself.

In the completeness of his manhood youth enters the Christian way. It is difficult for us at this distance to realize how naturally the language of sacrifice sprang to the lips of religious men in the first century. Through the ages sacrifices had smoked on a million altars in every land, and in the worship of the Temple the smoke of animal sacrifices was then rising to heaven day by day. What Christ desires is not the offering of slaughtered animals; the death of creatures who could know nothing of the cause for which they died, was not to the Christian a reasonable service; but rather the presentation of living persons in the fullness of their vitality and energy.

Many thinkers in Paul's time considered the body incurably evil; it was the unruly yoke-fellow which dragged its team-mate, the soul, into the mire. Paul knew too well the resistance which the flesh offers to the spirit; nevertheless he recognized the body as the organ of all moral action. For example in I Corinthians 6:13-20, where he is dealing with serious moral perversions, he affirms that the body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. He taught that our bodies are members of Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit, and that God is to be glorified in them. Personality is a unity; what is done through the body the man does and is responsible for before God; by the same free will he can give his body up to God and God will take it over. Here we have the source of the modern ideal of sanctified manhood and womanhood, our entire nature possessed by the Spirit of God.

The mind is to be renewed; spiritual quickening awakens the intellect. Imagine the Epistle to the Romans being sent to a little community newly out of paganism, and appreciated by them. The first effect of this mental quickening is moral discrimination; the apostle expects in the Christian the insight which can discern the will of God in any situation. Back of this is the renewal of the nature which comes through reception of the Gospel message, and the person renewed in Christ is capable of taking issue with everything inconsistent with Christ's spirit. Only the Creator can thus create anew; but we must put ourselves into His hands for that purpose. "Do not adopt the external and fleeting fashion of the world," the apostle pleads "but be ye transformed in your innermost nature that in all circumstances you may recognize the will of the Father, the good and acceptable and perfect."

All this is concerned with the individual's response to Christ's redeeming activity, past and present. But the Christ-filled soul is also a member of a spiritual community. Dr. C. A. Scott touches the nerve centre of the Christian's salvation when he says, "By St. Paul salvation was contemplated as a corporate experience. It was no doubt apprehended by the individual as an individual, but it came within his range only because God had dealt savingly with mankind. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself'—the salvation-experience of the individual was secured to him as part of the experience of the whole."¹

¹ C. A. Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*. Cambridge University Press.

"Paul has three pictures for the Church—the family, the human body, and the Temple—every one of them implying a new unity of design with great diversity of function."¹ Believers are born of the family and into the family of God. The Spirit of God in every Christian links together all in whom he abides. We belong to the other children of our heavenly Father and they to us; we are brothers and sisters in Him. The Church is doing everything she can do to impress on you that you belong to her and she to you. Take, for example, the Baptismal Service celebrated here last Sunday—every one of you was owned and sealed as Christ's by the sacred rite which He ordained, and by the sacramental offering of the family and the Church to God as the channels through which the grace symbolized by the outpoured water may reach the child's soul.

To quote Dr. Denney's comment on another figure: "Every member of Christ's body has his gift, but it is limited by the fact that he is only a member and not the whole body. To himself every man is the most important person in the world, and it always needs grace to see what other people are and to keep a sense of moral proportion."

To change the figure again, as living stones we are built into God's spiritual temple, but there can be no temple if the stones are scattered. "We are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."²

¹ T. R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus*, Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd.

² Ephesians 2:20-22.

In the passages before us, Paul's eyes are turned, not upward to his great ideas, but outward to the little groups of believers gathered around the person of Christ. They were self-governing communities in whose government each had a voice. They elected their own spiritual rulers; the word used in Acts 14:23 for the appointment of elders means literally chosen by show of hands. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people was a reality in the Church of Christ from the beginning. But these little self-governing groups were not yet accustomed to self-government. They were drawn chiefly from the humbler classes, many of them slaves, and used to being treated as chattels. Their temptation in their spiritual freedom was to run to the opposite extreme and over-emphasize their rights and abilities. Women, taught the equality of all in Christ, wanted to break down the safeguards which their race had built around the sanctity of the home; men exulting in their new spiritual endowments wanted to use them to the exclusion of others equally endowed. It was not easy to enforce discipline among the newly awakened, and the exercise of authority was resented by many even when they themselves had chosen the authorities. Yet harmony and order in the Church and the effectiveness of her testimony to the world depended on leadership being wisely chosen and wisely exercised, and on each of the led finding and keeping and filling his place.

Paul had dealt extensively with this matter of the body of Christ and its members in I Corinthians 12, and he summarizes that chapter in verses 3 to 8 here.

Look at this idea of qualifications for spiritual service as gifts of God. D. L. Moody's power as a preacher

was the direct result of his enduement with the Holy Spirit. Naturally he had no gift of oratory. Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston began his ministry as a student lost in his books, with no interest in affairs. Then he too was led into a consecration which brought him the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and immediately he took hold of the multiplied ministries which his district needed and which his church could provide. After one of his enterprises had been carried though to success, a newspaper, which had criticized him severely, added this: "There is no doubt, however, that Dr. Gordon is a man of great executive ability." Talents denied by nature were supplied by grace.

The unique gifts of different men and women challenge us every day. I remember a teacher who came to a school down by the sea. She was small of stature and her voice was as gentle as the sea breeze which came with the tide. She took hold of a school which had the roughest lot of youngsters I ever knew, not vicious, but good-natured rowdies who knew nothing of discipline. The moment she took charge, quiet reigned. She did not enforce order; she could not have done so if she had tried: but her will was law. Of course, she had the firmness and efficiency that you know about, and the earnestness which Paul urges here, but under it all there was that gift of spiritual authority which created an atmosphere in which we loved to work with her in all that she put before us.

So with other gifts. Prophecy—insight into truth and magnetic utterance; practical service—a St. Francis of ancient and modern times; teachers—the masters of those who know and the inspiration and often the despair of those who learn; the man who encourages his brethren to act on what they know and who does it

with scarce-felt touches of the hand. Asked to give, answer with graciousness, which means more than liberality. A man who had searched for work when none was to be had said that often people to whom he applied explained their inability to give him work so considerably that he went away with his head up and his heart warmed, encouraged to persist until he succeeded. Exercise your gift in Christ's spirit, but not so as to shoulder out the services of others whose gifts are the equal of your own.

Then discover and cultivate your gifts. Many whose services the world needs have no idea of their possibilities in Christ. When I look at the history of the organizations of this congregation over the last thirty years, nothing gratifies me as much as the leadership found among their members. The Board of Management and the Board of Missions, the Kirk Club, the Y.P. Association, the Women's Association and the Women's Missionary Society, have thrown up leaders whose inventiveness and devotion have opened up year by year new areas of fruitful ministry. Time and again we have felt that there was no one to take the place of the leader who was retiring; then someone was brought forward, not to do the work of his predecessor, but to make a contribution as distinctive and as necessary as any that went before. The world is awed at the discovery of the energy in the atom; the spiritual resources hidden in the membership of a congregation like this are equally surprising, and there is nothing more necessary than to develop them and bring them into action.

When Paul turns to break down his Christian principles into particular virtues, his imagination

catches fire, and in defiance of grammar and of logical order he pours out his pleadings for the Christ-like qualities which he has seen his converts exhibit even in the face of martyrdom and which he himself has found in Christ. In the background of his thought is the spirit which has always cursed mankind and which he sees withering in the white light of Christ's self-abnegation. The pride which magnifies its own gifts by belittling others', the selfishness and self-assertion which pushes itself forward regardless of who is pushed aside, the ambition which would make the prostrate forms of his brethren his stepping-stones to the heights, are replaced in the Christian by qualities the very opposite in every detail. The Christian ethic has a quality and flavour peculiarly its own and also it exercises a creative energy which reproduces in the souls of men the virtues which it has found in Christ.

The first phrase covers all the others: Let your love be without pretense, genuine, all-subduing. Dr. J. A. Macdonald loved to tell this story from Henry Van Dyke. Dr. Van Dyke once asked Lord Tennyson a question which only an American could think of: "If all your writings were to be swept into oblivion with only one passage left, which one would you choose for immortality?" Tennyson reflected for a moment and answered:

Love took up the harp of Life and smote on all the chords
with might,
Smote the chord of Self which, trembling, passed in music
out of sight.

This love takes the form of immeasurable goodwill toward the lost in sin, a will to bless them, an appreciation of their worth to God based, not on what they are,

but on what they have it in them to become in Christ. With one's fellow Christians this love creates a fellowship in which each receives from the other as much as he gives. For example, no words of mine can describe adequately the enrichment brought to us by the new fellowship into which we enter through Church Union. A communion became possible with people of other traditions and forms of spiritual experience which added new treasures to what our own Church had given us. The preciousness of friendships formed in our own congregation enables us to appreciate the words of Robert Browning:

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe, and hope and fear,
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

We must leave the next phrase exactly where Paul puts it: "Abhor that which is evil." To quote Dr. Denney again: "Love is not a principle of mutual indulgence; in the Gospel it is a moral principle, and, like Christ, who is the only perfect example of love, it has always something inexorable about it." He never condoned evil. The conscience of the believer tends to become calloused by contact with the Godless world and unavoidable familiarity with its wicked ways. Alexander Pope warns us:

Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

The person who has lost his capacity for being shocked at the evil around him is close to the tolerance which is reconciled to its baneful activities, and which pre-

pare the young people whom he influences to yield to it. The people of Ontario with the liquor traffic, for example. Do not lose your sense of moral distinctions, the apostle pleads; you are called to reflect the wrath as well as the love of God. But, above all, the divine passion for the souls of men, threatened by evil and dear to God, must be kept turning in your soul. "Never flag in your zeal. Be aglow with the spirit. Serve the Lord."

This love works itself out with a divine investment. "Love one another with tender affection." Never be lukewarm toward hearts open to you. Young people are often perplexed by the half-hearted, hesitant lover. He is like the salt which has lost its savour, and no one knows what to do with him. Christian love in the family must be warm, spontaneous, constant.

Outdo one another in showing honour. Love is eager to give talent its opportunity and sees powers latent in the one loved of which he himself is unaware. Nowhere has love offered richer benefits to mankind than in its discovery of unsuspected genius and in its self-investment in others' self-realization.

Love shares the necessities of the saints; the word means communing with them in their need and putting one's whole soul into its supply. This is more than a contribution; it also is self-communication.

Love pursues hospitality—using the same word with which Paul describes the persecutor in the next sentence. In fact, to frustrate the persecutor is often love's chief concern. The way in which the underground in Europe sheltered, and is sheltering, the refugee, feeding him and helping him on his way, is the modern equivalent of hospitality of New Testament

times when Christians were hunted like wild beasts through the empire.

Someone has written, humility is the immediate effect of self-surrender to God. This means the teachable spirit; the self-satisfied feels no need of what even God can give and hence is incapable of spiritual progress. Humility also opens the heart to what God imparts to us through others; our brethren find in Him what we never discerned and help us to acquire it.

Catch the humour in the phrase already quoted: "Think not of yourselves more highly than you ought to think, but think of yourselves with sober judgment." Again: "Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly as one conscious of no difference between you and them; be not wise in your own conceits. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Peace is a condition of life together which may be broken up from either side; now, as far as it rests with you, strive after peace."

Take thought of what is noble in the sight of all. Wordsworth says of John Milton: "And yet thy heart the lowliest duties on herself did lay"; it is this voluntary acceptance of whatever is essential to the welfare of all which links soul with soul and generates such respect that antagonisms become impossible.

It is with His doctrine of forgiveness that Christ counters most sharply the spirit of the world. People frequently justify their mean revengefulness by claiming to represent God in exacting the penalty due for

the wrongs which they offer. Roderick Dhu boasts of himself:

He rights such wrongs where they are given
Though it were in the court of heaven.

Every schoolboy knows that this meant his own destruction. Robert Browning's advocate of justice echoes a similar claim:

Ah, "forgive", you bid him? While God's champion lives
Wrong shall be resisted: dead, why, he forgives.

He succeeded where Roderick Dhu failed and got his revenge, but the sweetness he expected turned into bitterness in his mouth and left him with a life-long regret.

The man who takes on himself the responsibility of vindicating justice usurps the throne of God. "The wrath" is the reaction of the divine nature against evil and all identified with it, and it cannot be turned aside. Justice will be done, but its vindication belongs to God.

No one can accept Christ's forgiveness and refuse to forgive. God's mercy makes salvation possible; those who live by it must practise it. Isabella, in Shakespeare's play, pleads for a convicted offender and urges:

Why, all the souls that were were perfect once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

The only treatment of evil which is an asset to the Kingdom of God is that which turns the wrong-doer against the wrong he has done. Love unlimited is the only cure for the world's hatred. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount is content with nothing but the love which claims the wrong-doer for its own ends. Our chapter concludes, Do not be overcome by evil; "wrong is not defeated, but is doubly victorious when repelled by its own weapons." But wrong melts in the light of love as ice vanishes under the rays of the sun. Hence our chapter concludes: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

XI

THE PRIMACY OF LOVE

I CORINTHIANS 13:13

ONCE, WHEN a student on a mission field, I called to see a young friend who had started business in a blacksmith's shop. He had just finished a big job and was redding up the place. There was a lot of waste material lying about, the odds and ends left after the job was finished, but soon it became clear that it was not all rubbish to him. He would pick up this bit of iron, look it over and put it here; another bigger piece and put it there. When I remarked on this he explained, "I see that this bit will do for a certain thing and put it away for that purpose; that another is good for something else and I keep it close by until that need arises." What to me was waste had value to him because he knew its quality and he saw where it would fit. He saw in it what I couldn't see because he could do with it what I couldn't do. He valued the leavings of an old job not for what they were but for what he could make of them and for the purpose they could be made to serve. What to others was fit only for the rubbish-heap to him was raw material on which to exercise his skill, and so he redeemed the scraps from uselessness and fitted them back into the purposes of men.

We have no word in English as they have in the Greek New Testament for love distinctively Christian.

“Charity” might have been kept the sacred vessel for this heavenly treasure, but common use has degraded it to mean only one of the expressions of love, and a poor one at that. Christian love, as distinct from the human affection which is based on liking and the attraction of the sexes which is characterized by possessiveness, means love with a purpose, a love which loves others, not so much for what they are, as for what they have it in them to become. In the terms of that illustration from the blacksmith’s shop, Christian love has as its background the consciousness of what God can do through us to reproduce Himself in men, and just as the blacksmith saw something in the scrap of iron on which he could exercise his skill for the objects he had in view, so the Christian sees in every individual a capacity for God and a unique quality which he can cultivate to high perfection if he gets the opportunity. This love includes a purpose which is ready to invest itself in that person’s self-realization. Christian love is the creative instinct reflected from the heart of God, ever going out in search of new fellowships, confident in its ability to uncover them in the most unlikely cases and finding its own satisfaction in what becomes of them. It is not true that it does not desire a return, but there is nothing selfish in that desire, because its all-sufficient reward is the perfection and usefulness which its objects attain under the hand of God.

Bear in mind the setting of this poem on love, called by Harnack “the greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote.” It is one of his asides, or “escapes,” in which he breaks away from a discussion

of a practical matter to give vent to his convictions on the nobler qualities of the Christian life. He is writing to a church which has gone wild about its gifts and which held that the more unusual and sensational the supernatural endowment the more obviously was it of God. These have their value, Paul concedes, although his estimate of their relative worth is very different from others', but what alone can make them serve the ends of God and reproduce the Christ in the lives of men is love. It was love which Christ came to earth to establish, love in our relationships with God and with one another; it was for love's sake that He turned away from the earthly power and glory which might have been His and chose the cross instead; love was Christ's discovery in God, love is His message to men, and He fails at every point where love is not enthroned.

The first position which Paul establishes is that love is the Christian quality in every earthly, or heavenly, power or possession. Without love your gift may be the most amazing exhibition of the divine resource, or the divine energy, ever seen in the arena of human activity, but without love it can be of no real value to you and it can do no real good to anybody else. For example, your gift of tongues may be raised to the degree of ability to speak in any of the languages of men, but if love be lacking the speaker is nothing to them but a noisy gong, or a clanging cymbal. "The writer wishes to show that, compared with the steady-shining star of inextinguishable love, this too attractive tongue-utterance was a fleeting meteor flash."

I was once in Chicago when a silver-tongued orator from another state was brought in to speak at a cele-

bration in honour of George Washington's Birthday, and Professor Graham Taylor, who had given his life to the service of the poor in Chicago, took his students down to hear him. In the oration one might trace the witchery of words and the trained speaker's art in tone and gesture, but from beginning to end there was not a sign that the speaker was even aware of the agony of the people's struggle with the difficulties of the hour, or a trace of sympathy with them; the result was that to that group of eager young enthusiasts and to their leader the oration, so finished in its technique, had no more significance than the buzzing of bees about a hive; not as much, because the bees have always a purpose to serve. Without love, it meant nothing.

You may be a prophet, proud possessor of the gift Paul valued most highly; you may have insight into the mysteries that have puzzled the generations and so have the knowledge which the Corinthians prized; you may through your faith be able to treat the obstacles which have barred the progress of the ages as a straw to be removed by a breath, yet without love you are nothing. That is to say, you are a moral cipher, your endowments counting for nothing in the movement of men upward toward the condition ordained for them in the decrees of God. "Prophecy in its widest range, and faith at its utmost stage," and yet the man possessed of them all amounts to nothing without love.

Again, one may dole out all his substance in food for the poor; he may even give his body to be burned, as an Indian fanatic did in Athens shortly before Paul's visit, but without love it profits him nothing. As J. A. Macdonald once put it, "My money will buy beans and bacon for the hungry as well as anybody else's, but if I have no love it profits *me* nothing." Or,

as another phrases it, "Love itself cannot find a more perfect and adequate expression, or show itself more lovely than in the sacrifice of one's goods or one's life for others, but without love they profit a man nothing in the sight of God"; nor does he become through loveless effort anything worth while in the sight of men.

The two gifts most highly valued in the modern church are the gift of speech and material possessions. The person who is able to serve the church in one or other of these ways receives the highest recognition. Yet, according to Paul, at their height their exercise brings no real benefit to the man himself unless they are prompted by love, exercised in love, and serve the ends of love. The Orient has a standard of values different from ours; there life is given far more freely for the cause. The whole Christian world was interested a few years ago in orphaned baby Helen Stam. The way her life was spared was thus described by a missionary who investigated the story throughout. The Communists, who had killed her parents, were on the point of killing the child to avoid the bother of taking care of it, "but a man who had been released by Communists only a few hours before from the village prison pleaded for the infant's life.

"'Don't harm an innocent thing like this,' he urged. 'It has done no harm to us.'

"'Who are you?' a Communist officer asked. 'Why do you intercede for the baby?'

"The prisoner said he had no connection with 'these foreigners,' but begged that the baby's life be spared.

"'Who will forfeit his life for the child?' the officer asked. The released prisoner volunteered and was

killed on the spot. The baby was spared and was found after the retreat of the Reds in an abandoned house." The Chinese witnesses who authenticated the story said that this man whom they thought of as a martyr "gained great heavenly favour by his act." I cannot read that story and believe that merit for himself in the Court of Heaven was that man's only motive. Perhaps he found life itself but little gain and felt that he was making a poor thing out of it; certainly he had a heart of pity for a helpless babe who had no one to befriend her; and when he leaped at the chance of winning life for her by the sacrifice of his own, there was love in it to a measure rarely known in this selfish world. What Paul affirms is that it is only the love in any such act which makes it a factor in building up the divine in the man who does it.

Look at the sweep of Paul's affirmation: Without love I mean nothing, no matter how much I say nor how loudly I talk; without love I am nothing, no matter how vast my pretensions and acquisitions; without love I get nothing, no matter how limitless my investments. As one expresses it, "Love is that *something* without which *anything* one may do, or suffer, becomes *nothing*." Or, as another says: "All loveless abilities, endowments, sacrifices are, from the Christian point of view, simply good for nothing."

Love's behaviour is described with a wealth of detail and a splendour of colouring that captures our imagination. First, love is long suffering and love is kind, long-tempered and good-hearted. The two go together, for considerateness is at the root of both. In provoking situations love makes allowances and tries to understand; it gives the other chance after chance to

bring out his best. Therefore we can never separate the first of these attributes of love from the last; "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Lovers of Edmund Spenser will remember the adventures and misadventures of the Red Cross Knight. There were two distinct strata in his nature, the superficial and the fundamental. The deepest in him rose in response to the call of a great cause in distress and he became its champion; the surface tendencies and desires got their chance when difficulties arose in his way and discouragement opened his heart to the tempter. Temptation is always just around the corner ready for any opening, and when the temptress betrayed the tempted, he betrayed the cause. Una, the symbol of Truth believes that the deepest in him is the real man, and, in order to win him back to himself, she endures ill-treatment at his hands and then shares with him the humiliation and suffering which his infidelity to her and to his cause had brought on him. In this way she brings him deliverance from his enemies and re-awakens his better self. Then the victory over the evil in himself prepares him for victory over the enemies of truth and humanity.

Love can never prevail without going that far. It believes when others doubt, it hopes when others condemn, it endures patiently the worst to give the loved a second chance. "This is ever love's way—to rise it stoops." It is long-suffering, and the suffering is deep and real yet it continues.

Unfailingly tolerant;
Unfailingly trustful;
Unfailingly hopeful;
Unfailingly strong.

If long-suffering expresses the self-restraint of love, kindness expresses its self-abandonment. The former is love's attitude in the face of wrong whether due to malice or weakness; the latter is love's response to need. Kindness treats everybody's need as an opportunity which it is a privilege to embrace. The human heart has many defects, but there is a wealth of kindness in it, purer than gold seven times refined. I always remember with gratitude men of the woods and streams whom I knew as a boy on the Gaspé Coast. Some of our people might consider them rough; certainly they did not have the veneer of urban civilization; but if kindness is the measure of manhood, there were giants in that land in those days. To let them help you was to do them a favour and they did it in a way that both met your need and gladdened your heart. Later, on the church's mission fields, the student met the same kindness and with it a confidence in him that drove him to his best. David Grayson's description of "The Friendly Road" and what he found on it is my experience all through Canada, east and west and north. The sheer kindness of a countryside when necessity, or accident, or disease, or death steps in is itself an epic in praise of love. In the homeliest surroundings you will find tragedy darker than anything in *Paradise Lost*. The touch of kindness is the shortest way to the heart, and the best interpretation of the approach of God.

Rising out of this, love envies not; literally it does not boil over with jealousy that others prosper. The jealous temper which eats its own heart out when others come into something which we cannot have is the very reverse of love—its opposite and its contra-

diction; and when love ascends the throne jealousy is put in chains in the dungeon. It is no easy captive to keep confined, because there is something in us which is secretly gratified at another's misfortune, or humiliation. This spirit which would pull another down for no other reason than that we cannot rise to his level is far more common than we realize, and is today a social menace of the first order. "I hate you and all your class," one young girl said to another; and when asked why, continued, "Because you have things which I cannot get." Every revolution revels in destructiveness, the chief motive of which is this hateful vice. Love is not jealous; it can rejoice in another's good. Whenever you honestly congratulate anyone, you enter into their joy over the good that has come to them and make it your own.

In Paul's mind the occasion of envy follows close on the heels of the boastful spirit, and love is never a braggart in deportment and never swells with self-adulation. Ostentation, the brag which shows off qualities or possessions not too creditable anyway, is a moral indecency of which love is clear. It often happens that the one who is envious of superiority in others assumes superiority in himself, and is arrogant toward inferiors. Lovers of Edmund Spenser still remember the picture he draws of "Braggadocio" the would-be Valiant who paraded in the armour of brave men and claimed the credit of their victories, but was himself craven in spirit toward the meanest foe. How much of our social discontent is due to the foolish parade of riches and luxury on the part of those who have! "Love imparts a delicacy of feeling far beyond the rules of politeness" and is incapable of such osten-

tation. The love that is herself clear of envy at the good fortune of her friends would shrink from adding the weight of a hair to the humiliation which failure brings.

The fact that love goes beyond the rules of politeness does not lead it to ignore the superficial, for the simple reason that the surface usually indicates what is below. So love does not behave unmannerly. "The inner man gives expression to the outer. So far from 'manners making the man' the man makes the manners. That charm of manner which goes straight to the heart because it comes fresh from the heart, that touch of tenderness which makes it a pleasure to receive what is clearly a pleasure to give, is one of the many moral fruits of the divine root: this winning deportment is based upon the principle of respect for God's image in man"¹ and is the opposite of the spirit which led Paul to demand, "Why dost *thou* set at nought thy *brother*?"

Here is a phrase which raises the issue of our day as no other does in the whole chapter: "Love seeketh not her own." We hear a great deal in these days about "the profit motive in business," and many demands are made for replacing the profit motive by intent to serve. Much of this criticism is shallow; unless a farmer, for example, can dispose of his products on terms which enable him to go on producing, his work and our supplies must necessarily come to a dead stop. The enterprise which does not pay must be abandoned. Nevertheless there is a world of difference between the

¹ *I Corinthians, Speaker's Bible*, ed. by E. Hastings. Speaker's Bible Office.

man who wants to deal with you for what he can make out of you, and the man who honestly believes that he can advance your interest in his line and earnestly sets himself to do so. He is able to give you a better service than you know and it is his pride to go beyond your expectations. If you can count on his disinterestedness when your affairs in his hands get into a tight corner you have a ground for satisfaction and a sense of security which nothing but the spirit of service can inspire. Men are giving and getting that service in a thousand different lines, and it is the glory of a period which has all too little to glory in. At the same time we have been humiliated by exposures of a spirit which seeks to prey on its constituency and to aggrandize itself at the expense of those whom misfortune has left in its power. Whenever human interests arise love takes the form of unselfishness; the love which Christ inspires is ready at any point to spend and be spent for its neighbour; it cannot be love otherwise.

Love does not fly into a rage and does not keep account of evil done. Some men are quick-tempered; a word and they blaze with anger; but the fire which kindles as instantaneously as gun-powder goes out just as quickly. Others are slow to wrath, but once aroused their resentment never dies. Love shuns both extremes. No doubt Paul had his own break with Barnabas in mind here, that sharp contention over John Mark, Barnabas' nephew, who had failed them once and who wanted a second chance. In that blaze of wrath Paul broke with the best friend he ever had, the best friend any man ever had, and although he got a chance later to make the wrong right with Mark, he never was reunited with Barnabas. Profit by my own example,

he seems to say, and fortify your own spirits against paroxysms of exasperation. If you or your friend should fall into this mistake, right the wrong as soon as it is recognized; do not store up resentment and bear malice; life is far too short for carrying poison in your soul.

Do not let us treat this irritability and unforgiving temper as trifles; these springs are the source of giant rivers of wrong. Henry Drummond's indictment of this evil is as follows:

No form of vice, not worldliness, not greed of gold, not drunkenness itself does more to unchristianize society than evil temper. For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking the bloom off childhood—in short, for sheer gratuitous misery-producing power, this influence stands alone.¹

We must hurry this analysis of love's qualities to a close.

To some people a bit of scandal is a morsel which they must share with everyone they meet, and the more it is shared the bigger each portion grows. Love rejoices not over iniquity. Rather, it rejoices with the truth. Here truth is personified and love and truth rejoice together. Love produces in others what it sees as their possibilities. Trust men and they become trustworthy. Love them and they become loving. Heap responsibilities upon them and they become great enough to bear them. On the other hand, suspect or

¹ Henry Drummond, *The Greatest Thing in the World*.

despise men, and they will answer to your attitude by becoming what you expect. Love, on the other hand, will not let them go; it sees in God's heart and in their nature the divine design for them, and in the abandonment of self-surrender commits itself to their realization. Its creative energy is its capacity to reproduce itself in every life it touches.

It is all summed up in the phrase, "Love never fails." Paul imagines himself at the end of the age, on the edge of that upheaval in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the earth dissolve with fervent heat. There he enquires: What is it that will prove indestructible when all the things that can be destroyed do immediately disappear? All material things will vanish in smoke. Earthly knowledge, the Corinthians' boasted gifts, even prophecy will fade like shadows before the great reality. But love will last. It is an attribute of God Himself and all those who live in love are immortal as the divine nature. Establish this love in the hearts of men, and let it govern their treatment of one another and the problems of the world are solved. Many are pinning their faith to a change of the social system for the inbringing of the better order for which we hope and pray; all history shows that a change of system without a change of heart is just a change of tyrants. Let love reign and any framework can be made a setting for its triumphs. Why love can make even war its opportunity and can let its glory shine through the black darkness of human hate.

I picked up this story out of the records of a search for Britain's unknown dead. The body of a British soldier was discovered on one of the old battlefields.

As the reward is paid only if the body has not been unduly disturbed the finder telephoned to the nearest War Graves section who sent out a party at once. These men know their work and proceeded carefully. After a few hours they discovered there were two bodies instead of one, the second being underneath. The left arm of the first man was under the head of the other. His right hand clasped a water bottle within which still rattled a little water. The uniform of the second man was unbuttoned disclosing a blackened swab of shell-dressing over a smashed pelvis. Between the elbow and the shoulder of the arm that held the water-bottle was a band of lighter colour than khaki.

Gently the clay was brushed from the rotten fabric and faintly, very faintly, were discernable the letters S.B.—the badge of the front-line Red Cross men, the battalion Stretcher Bearers. The body underneath was that of a German.

The simple battle story was easy to read. The attack by one side or the other—no matter now. The wounded German. The first-aid man doing his job by friend and foe alike and the devastating thunder of the huge shell that had swooped from the sky to bury these two human atoms beneath seven feet of clay.

Treasure indeed!

Not the love that conquered hate, but the love that just ignored it and had nothing to do with its progeny except try to undo the harm it had done. God grant that in these days of threatening storm love may be able to disperse altogether the gathering clouds of international suspicion and anger and make the deliberate destruction of man by man forever impossible. But in the meantime let it rule in every little corner of the world which we govern and peace like a river will attend all our ways.

XII

THE DIVINE SOCIETY

EPHESIANS 4:4-7, 11-16

A CHRISTIAN business man, with generations of church loyalty behind him, took hold of the financial problem of a little congregation in the middle west and in a short time had it solved. He said: "If we show our people that we have in the church the biggest thing that there is, they will meet its needs; if we ask for dimes and nickels we'll get nothing."

"The biggest thing that there is." One who has given his life to the Church cannot feel otherwise. The Christian ministry is a "calling," not merely a "living," although the living is involved because one could not give full time service without it. The members of the church whom he serves are the called of God and his call as a minister is to help in giving effect to God's purposes in them. The Church is free; our membership in it is our free answer to God's call, but the Church is more than a voluntary institution. "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you," said Jesus to His followers as He put His cause into their hands; the authority which the Father gave His Son, the Son transmitted to His Church. The Church is historic; it is the one body whose history goes back beyond the time of its founder to the prophets and priests through whom God prepared the world for Christ's coming. The building may be new but its commission is timeless; the centuries

look down upon us from every point where "the Called of God" assemble to worship Him. The Church is the ambassador of Christ through whom He pleads with men to be reconciled to God. The Church is the one organization which changes human nature at its source. Other institutions bring influences to bear upon the individual to develop his character and cultivate his gifts; the Church aims to make the man himself new. The Church is the only agency which not only holds up the ideal but also brings into human life a divine reinforcement which enables men to rise to the ideal. It grafts the human branch into the divine stem so that the energies of the divine Spirit flow through our souls, and our energies, thus renewed, build up the organism into which we have grown. The Church is universal; the experience of the past testifies to the fact that wherever the souls of men rise to their Author, He meets and greets them. Every little congregation in the land is the Church of the living God, historic and universal, in action in its peculiar situation. It has the Bible containing God's Word in the present, the ministry of the Word and Sacraments and the commission to share with all mankind the salvation which God wrought out for all who accept His Son.

With these facts in mind, for facts they are, may we study the conceptions of the Church found in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, especially as set forth in the illustrations which he used. The letter is written to emphasize the unity of all believers in Christ. Being born of God means being born into the family of God and into the brotherhood of believers; being rooted in Christ means sharing the common life of the branches;

being builded into God's spiritual temple means builded together on the one foundation.

In chapter 2:11-21 the key word is "together". Paul takes hold of the issues that divided men and shows how Christ, not satisfied with bridging them, fills them in and obliterates them. He is writing to Gentiles and he tells them that whereas they were formerly mere sojourners, residents with none of the rights of citizenship, they are now taken into the Covenant and made members of the commonwealth of God's people, that whereas they used to be aliens in blood and speech, they are now members of the household of God. Then the figure changes and he describes them as God's new spiritual temple built together on the foundations of the apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief corner-stone. By Orientals the corner-stone was reckoned as of first importance because it bound the walls together as well as having the weight of the building concentrated on itself. Christ is our blessed bond of union; it is only in Him that we can be one. But His apostles and prophets are with Him in bearing responsibility for the Church. Speaking of Christ's words to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my Church," Principal Lindsay commented that the Church's foundation is not the man apart from the confession, not the confession apart from the man, but the man confessing. The foundation of every spiritual enterprise is some person possessed with a great idea and putting himself into realizing it in action. Here the inspired are with Christ the foundation on which the Church rests. Paul does not call its members "living-stones" as Peter does, but he means the same thing: the materials for God's spiritual temple are the quick-

ened souls of His people who are builded together for His habitation.

When at this distance we try to get at the New Testament ideal of the Church's unity, it does not appear as Jesus or Paul thought of the Church as a close-knit organization, holding in subjection Christian congregations throughout the world. But they did expect those who live in Christ to be in open fellowship with one another. The sin of the schism is the barrier which it raises between believers. In Reformation days the Churches were recognized in each nation according to its peculiar genius, the Reformed in Scotland, Geneva and Holland, the Lutheran in central and northern Europe and the Episcopal in England. There was open fellowship and free interchange between these Churches and they envisaged the Church of the future as one with all its parts in open communion with one another. Knox served the Church in Geneva, then in England under Edward VI, and then in Scotland, and was free to serve in them all. Local loyalties, all the more fanatical because mistaken, controversy over secondary matters, persecution and self-interest raised barriers between the different sections of the Church which the leaders of the Reformation never dreamed of, and severed those whom God had joined together.

As examples of the Church's foundation-stones I think of the people who accepted responsibility for the Church in the various mission fields which I served in the remote corners of this country—men and women of substantial worth, solid in character, firm in their convictions, and steady in their devotion. You could count on them for the support of anything that was true and right and good. Dr. J. T. Ferguson once told

of a woman entering a little community, one of those new villages which sprawl over the prairie and lack a vital centre. Sunday evening she went to church and found it a disheartening experience. The room was dingy and had only half a dozen people in it, and the minister so obviously disheartened that the service was depressing. She began to talk about it to the women who called on her, and when they said that the church and the preacher were uninteresting, she asked: "How can they be interesting when you have no interest in Christ's Church?" First, she got the women together behind the minister; through them she reached their husbands; new life came into the services through the new interest which the people displayed, and in ten years they had a church and manse built and paid for, and a ministry that was an inspiration. What had happened? The church had been tottering to its fall and Christ put into its foundation a living-stone whose substance was divine.

The Church as the body of Christ is Paul's favourite illustration. In Ephesians 1:22-23 he writes, "The Church which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all." The Church is here regarded as "an organic spiritual unity in a living relation to Christ, subject to Him, animated by Him, and having His power operating in it. . . . The Church is not merely an institution ruled by Him as President, a Kingdom in which He is the Supreme Authority, or a vast company of men in moral sympathy with Him, but a Society which is in vital connection with Him, having the source of its life in Him, sustained and directed by His power, the instrument also by which He works."

The Church is Christ's fulness. In other words, Christ finds His completeness in His union with His people. No matter how perfect the head may be as a head, it is incomplete without the body. A person who loses a limb is to that extent crippled; there are impulses in his nature which he cannot put into effect because the faculty for that purpose is missing. So Paul conceives of the Christ without the Church as lacking organs for the functions of His nature and as gradually growing toward perfection as one member with another is added to His mystical body. "The Christ that is to be" is the glorified Redeemer and His Church in one living organism, a union of personalities for the fulfilment of the purposes of the eternal.

If this be true, then every member of the body of Christ has a function to fulfil particularly his own. The eye is different from the ear and the hands from the feet; their very diversity qualifies each for a contribution to the body's health and efficiency. There must, therefore, be in the body no disparagement of the capabilities of other members. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" Also there must be no self-depreciation among the members of the body of Christ. "If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body."¹

As we have dealt with these figures in a previous study, there is only one point that calls for emphasis

¹ I Corinthians 12:14-21.

here. Anyone who calls his fellow-members to service for Christ and His Kingdom is sure to meet this objection: I have none of the qualifications which this type of service requires. Now each of us has gifts peculiarly his own and can do well what no other can do as well. The minister has an approach to the soul which no other has and the layman has an approach to the same people which is closed to the minister. As a young minister I was called to a church in a railway and factory town. One of the most effective of my elders was a surgeon and physician, successful in his practice, and withal a man so widely read and so broad in his interests and sympathies that he was an asset in any company. He was also a devout believer. My first surprise was to find that in homes of sickness and sorrow the minister had an authority which even their family physician did not have, and the people expected him to take hold of situations in a manner which would have been intrusion on the part of anyone else. But the physician could do things which the minister could not do apart altogether from his professional services. For example, this surgeon was asked to operate on a patient from a little country community. She was filled with anxiety and fear on entering the hospital. The city was so vast, the hospital so huge in its proportions, even the efficiency of the nurses was frightening to her. The surgeon came in to examine his patient and find for himself what was necessary, but soon he found himself more than a surgeon for he read her fears at a glance. He had come from the same sort of place that she had come from and knew her interests and anxieties. After the examination was finished he sat down by her bedside and soon had her telling him

about her children and the farm and the local church with all their interests and activities. Then he took out his New Testament, read a passage and prayed with her. When he rose from his knees she pointed her finger at him and said, "Is this the man who is going to operate on me? I'll never be afraid again." No minister could have done that. In the same way there are scores of services that you can render to people whose lives are close to your own which no other can offer. Your success in your occupation gives you an influence over other minds and Christ wants that to be used in helping them settle the deepest problems of their being.

Another illustration which Paul uses to set forth the nature of the Church is that of the family. "Ye are members of the household of God," he writes in Ephesians 2:19. In the passage before us he affirms his faith in "One God and one Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." Then he expatiates on the diverse gifts with which the different members of the divine family are endowed. Here our unity is grounded in God. "The verse expresses a three-fold relation of the One God and Father to the *all* who are His: first, the relation of transcendence expressing the supremacy of absolute God-head and Fatherhood; second, that of immanence, expressing the pervading, animating, controlling presence of that One God and Father; and, third, that of indwelling, expressing the constant abode of the One God and Father in His people by His Spirit. Neither the creative action of God nor His providential rule is in view, but what He is to the Christian people in His dominion

over them and His gracious operative presence in them.”¹

We are reminded here of the statement oft repeated that the Fatherhood of God is the only possible basis for the brotherhood of man. A missionary once remarked: “I have seen men of different races encounter one another in ports like Hong Kong and Shanghai where it was in their interests to work together, and yet the moment they met they struck fire. There seems to be something in human nature which makes the clash of colour inevitable.” Yet let Christians of different races come together, even in difficult circumstances, and instinctively they recognize their kinship in Christ. Differences in race, if it is felt at all, only deepens their fellowship and makes more precious the spiritual contribution which each has for the other.

We are often surprised at the way a distinct individuality appears in a babe as he begins to develop and then are startled to find children in the same family differing sharply from one another. Often two children of the same parents will be as different in disposition, tastes, gifts and outlook, as if they belonged to tribes on opposite sides of the world. These children, as they grow up, can be loyal to the ideals of the family and perpetuate its traditions while they cannot but embody them in forms very different from those in their parents’ minds. Yet it is these children who will determine the future character of the family.

Qualities as diverse are found in members of the family of God. About one hundred and thirty churches

¹ S. D. F. Salmond, *Expositor's Greek Testament* Vol. III. Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.

have accepted the invitation to join the World Council of Churches, some of them vigorous evangelical bodies from Latin America, others, equally convinced and energetic, from Asia and Africa. We welcome this widening of the range of agreement in Modern Christendom but seldom realize all that it implies. There are two effects of their growth for which the parent Churches may not be prepared. The sprouting seed casts off the shell which had protected it up to that point; the progress of young Churches to the place where they can choose and act for themselves will mean that the externals of religion, sacred to the parent bodies because of their memories of the past, will not be sacred to young Churches who have no such memories and who have a world of their own to save. For example, the new United Church of South India has adopted the Episcopate and consecrated their Bishops, but has dealt with the Episcopate in a way which the Church of England is unwilling to accept. Canterbury will not receive them into the Lambeth Fellowship on the same basis as other Episcopal Churches, and an American Episcopalian has just written that he could not find his spiritual home in a Church of that character. New Churches in other mission lands will do the same thing with traditions equally precious to people of our faith. Not only so, but the character and progress of the Christian Church of the future will be influenced profoundly by these new additions to the family of God, and her development will involve changes for which many are unprepared. Yet the Church's spiritual children will differ from one another as decisively as young people do in the families of earth, and together they will

decide what the Christendom of the future is to be. There is nothing for it but to accept them as the spirit of Christ works out in new forms and policies the will of the divine Father for His children in the new situations in which He places them.

Do we realize that the same change must take place in our congregation? We want the young people of our families to be interested in the church of their fathers. We believe that we are handing on to them a precious heritage; they will have to develop it in their own way. Reverence for the past may take forms which will shackle the Church of the future. The growing youth must outgrow the ideas of his childhood just as he outgrows his clothes. The shell which refuses to be cast off becomes a coffin. So the church which does not give its young people opportunity to voice their ideas and give effect to their aspirations in its organizations imperils its own future.

New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth:
We must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth.

Provision for differences there must be, but the differences between the members of the family make their union in one family possible. We are warned here: Do not let your diversities break up God's unities. You sin against Him when you do it. You also sin against yourself. Verse 13 shows that we can grow to full maturity only in relationships. "Till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the

stature of the fulness of Christ." Solitary sainthood is a contradiction in terms because all the gifts of the Spirit are for service, and the Christian graces are social, and the indwelling Spirit reaches out through the believer to every soul who will respond.

What is true of the individual is also true of the world as a whole. Mankind grows to perfection through the unity of each with all. The spirit of faction within the nations and self-interest, prejudice and pride between the nations, are wounding humanity to the heart at this present hour, whereas the spirit of Jesus is pressing through the Church toward reconciliation and healing. At the door of one of our churches I have just seen this motto:

"The Church must hold the world together."

The Church can do it only so far as Christ speaks through her and through this togetherness humanity will reach its goal. As Tennyson says:

Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning Age of ages,
Shall not aeon after aeon pass and touch him into shape?

All about him shadow still, but, while the races flower and
fade,

Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on the shade,
Till the peoples all are one, and all their voices blend in
choric

Hallelujah to the Maker "It is finish'd. Man is made."

"Come," we read in Revelation 21:9 "and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." That figure originated with Paul as he summed up the meaning of the Church to God in 5:25-27: "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, that He

might consecrate her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that the Church might be presented before him in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." This shows the preciousness of the Church and her membership to Christ, the heavenly bridegroom. All that we can think of as ideal in the family is true of the relationship between Christ and His Church. The earthly bride may have all the defects of ordinary girlhood but in the eyes of her spouse she is precious beyond compare. Everything that affects her concerns him. The pain of the one hurts the other and awakens in him a deeper concern than in the sufferer herself. Just as the Christian husband or wife, strives through all their life together to raise him, or her, to the noblest manhood, or womanhood, of which they are capable in Christ, so Christ aims to perfect in us the ideal in the Creator's mind when He made us. "Without spot," *i.e.*, undefiled by her contact with the world; "without wrinkle," *i.e.*, unmarred in her disposition of her losses and crosses; "without blemish," *i.e.*, the defects and faults of nature disciplined out of us by His providential dealings; "holy," *i.e.*, given up without reserve to Him for whom we wait. Christ aims at that ideal for each of us, and He is constantly moving us toward it by His spirit.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,

To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!¹

¹ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *St. Agnes' Eve*.

XIII

THE SOLIDARITY OF THE RACE

ROMANS 5:19
I CORINTHIANS 15:22

SOMEHOW I feel that I cannot do more than introduce this subject this morning. It is so great and so urgent that one cannot see all its complications. But is it not so that humanity is stricken to the heart by the splits between its members? One at heart, it is broken into fragments, its symmetry gone, the purpose behind its being frustrated. Superficial prejudices break up deep-seated unities; the clash of minor interests prevent cooperation in life's major concerns. Apart altogether from the destruction conflict causes or the construction it prevents, sensitive souls feel that living tissue is being torn, and the anger discord kindles is but one form of the pain inflicted by antagonisms where nature calls for good-will.

So I want to bring two or three of Paul's creative ideas before you, sparks struck by circumstances from an inspired mind, kindling in the tinder of the world's expectancy new hope for the race. He sees humanity rent and ravaged though it be, as essentially one, one in sin and suffering, one in hope and fear, and ultimately to be made vitally one of life's highest levels when God shall bring to a head all things in Christ.

I recall vividly an outburst by a popular preacher of years ago. Someone had made a loud profession of

his faith in Christ as his "personal Saviour," and the preacher had retorted, "Your personal Saviour! Oh, poor, small soul! Of course He is your personal Saviour." The obvious implication was that Christ was so much more. There are reasons for his feeling about Christ as his personal Saviour. Christ died for all, but it is by a personal decision to accept Him as Saviour and Lord that I enter the circle of those to whom that redemption applies. On the other hand, in making that decision I give effect to what my family and my Church claim for me, and then I am received by them into the fellowship of believers. I became a member of the Church in full communion just as I was entering my 'teens, and thought that I was making a great personal decision. In one way I was, for it decided the direction of my life, but, as I look back now over all that was involved in it, I see that I was giving outward expression to what my home and my Church had wrought in me. Christ was my personal Saviour, of course, but my personal salvation was only a part of His saving activity in everything that had moved me toward Him, and I should have failed to discern the object of that salvation unless I had recognized that the Christ who saved me made me a vital part of the spiritual environment out of which I had come with obligations to be undertaken as well as privileges to be enjoyed. Even in Christianity, which lays such stress on personality, it is impossible to separate the soul from its setting. The individual brings to Christ all that his people have wrought in him, and then, quickened by Christ, he is sent back to his people to strengthen the influences Christward in every circle he enters. Each person is formed by nature to be a part;

he belongs to an entity which claims him and is incomplete without him; and he finds his true self only by joining up with his fellows for the general good.

This interaction of the individual and his environment, with the relative importance attached to each, received very different emphasis through the centuries. In early Old Testament times, for example, the tribe was everything, and the individual important only so far as he served the tribe. If the individual transgressed the tribe suffered, as when Israel met defeat at Ai, because Achan had violated the ban on Jericho. Then when the wrong was brought home to Achan himself, his family suffered the death penalty with him.¹ Similarly, when King Saul broke his nation's pact with the Gibeonites and tried to exterminate them with the sword, he brought God's displeasure on the nation which he committed to that policy. Saul was dead when the penalty came upon them, but his sons suffered for their father's crime, the judgment which gave us the story of Rizpah, one of the most pathetic in all literature.² According to the ideas of that time, the individual had no rights as against the clan to which he belonged; the group was the unit with which God dealt, and the "individual's rights were merged in his people's relationships and fortunes."

As time went on, men awakened to the rights of the individual. A nation's life extends through the centuries; the individuals composing the nation change with the generations; when a nation sins and suffers it means that the individuals of a later generation suffer

¹ Joshua 7.

² II Samuel 21.

for the sins of an earlier one. Hence the proverb arose in Jeremiah's time, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Jeremiah replied sharply in the name of God, "In those days everyone shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grapes his teeth shall be set on edge."¹ The prophet there spoke for a developing national conscience. In the new light of a new day it was seen to be unjust for Achan's family and Saul's sons to suffer for a wrong of which they were personally innocent. Ezekiel elaborated this truth and brought his argument to a climax in the statement, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."² That principle has held through the ages in a nation's dealings with violations of their laws, and when we quoted Sir Hartley Shawcross's assertion that the Nuremberg Trials must show that "the ordinary people of the world are now determined that the individual must transcend the state," we were listening to an echo of Jeremiah's inspiration 2,600 years ago now turned against the Nazi attempt to restore the old system which denied the individual's rights in the interests of the nation.

But that stage of social development could never be the final one. Nature saw to it that the virtue of my ancestors gave me my health and vigour of body, mind and soul, all three, and more. If they had violated her laws, her penalties would have descended on me.

¹ Jeremiah 31:29-30.

² Ezekial 18:20.

Besides, men and women at their best refused to be separated from their people in either good or evil days. It marks an epoch in the moral progress of humanity that the man who gave the world the first dramatic affirmation of the rights of the individual refused to accept those rights for himself, but suffered with and for his people to the death. Jeremiah opposed a national policy which he saw would lead to national destruction, and bore the persecution which that opposition brought upon him; when the consequences which he had foretold came upon them he refused to be separated from them in their suffering but partook with them of the fruits of the crimes and blunders which he had condemned. Then when they embarked on another course which promised further disaster, he warned them against it and because his warning crossed their plans, he suffered death at their hands. So his loyalty and his martyrdom became the occasion and the inspiration of that picture of the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 53 who accepted responsibility for sins not his own and by his unmerited suffering saved a guilty race: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed"; a passage which more than any other shaped the earthly career of the Son of Man and the Saviour of the world. It has often been argued against our doctrine of atoning love that it is unjust to lay the penalty for an evil deed on an innocent person. It would be unjust if the authorities inflicted it without regard to his rights and merits. But when love moves a friend or patriot to accept responsibility for the evil condition in which the objects of his love have brought

themselves and for lifting them out of it we have the spirit of humanity in its noblest activity—saving the many by the sacrifice of itself. Take away that privilege and opportunity and humanity will die and the spirit of the hero stifled at its birth. Here, more than elsewhere, man reflects the love of God.

There are really three passages behind our study this morning: Romans 5:16-21 with its doctrine of human solidarity in sin and death, Philippians 3 with its doctrine of life through our solidarity with Christ, and I Corinthians 12 with its insistence on our solidarity with one another in Christ. Evangelical religion has often been accused of selfishness because it stresses the need of personal decision for Christ to be followed by the personal salvation of the soul thus accepting Him. What I want to show is that this personal salvation is impossible apart from the human channels through whom God's grace reached us and meaningless unless it makes us in our turn channels of that grace to others.

Paul begins, however, by arguing for human solidarity in sin. (vs. 12-14) "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come." Then these added phrases in his argument, "Many died through one man's trespass"; "because of that one man's trespass death reigned through that one man"; "one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men"; and, still more gravely, "by one man's disobedience many were

made sinners," where we see that the solidarity involved not only penalty but infection with the sin.

I do not want to go into the old discussion of original sin or the many theories of total depravity which arose out of them. But does it not seem clear that something is wrong with human nature, and that we are born into that wrongness? Once as a young student I was taken to St. James Church, Montreal, to hear there a brilliant young preacher from England who was also a scholar of high literary attainments. That morning his teaching was enthusiastically Pelagian. Children, he affirmed, were all born in a state of innocence; the evil which afterwards appeared in them was communicated to them by the people with whom they grew up. I had dinner that day with the maiden aunt of one of the most vigorous young families of my acquaintance, and, like all such families, occasionally obstreperous. When the sermon came up for discussion at the table, her eyes and her tones melted with pity for that youth, so well versed in literature but so ignorant of the facts of life. "Oh," she said, "he could never have said that if he had ever lived among young children." The root of sin is self-will, self-assertion against the rights of others or against what we know to be right, and that appears in the child as soon as he awakens to his relationships with those around him.

Can you wonder, therefore, that a writer of our own time has said this, "There is an evil tendency in man . . . there is a racial, a corporate, a social wrongness of which we are made in some sense partakers by the mere fact of our being born into human society. That is the meaning of 'original sin,' as the theologians call

it. . . . It is a corporate wrongness in which we are involved by being men in the world. . . . No one of us can disown his part in the complicated evils in which society is entangled." Once in a discussion of the justice of our cause in the war, one man broke out with, "But look at what we are involved in!" Well, look! Leland Stowe, an American writer, placards before the conscience of the world the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima to the destruction of 100,000 people, mostly civilians, and then the second on Nagasaki to kill another 50,000. I am not going into the American controversy about its necessity, or to try to decide whether those scientists were right who urged that a demonstration of its destructiveness sufficient to bring Japan to her knees could have been given by dropping it on a desolate region instead of on centres of population, or the generals who held that the Japanese must feel its power before they would acknowledge it; we know that it stopped the war and prevented the slaughter of millions of lives that would have been sacrificed in a prolonged struggle: all I want to point out is what we are involved in, the setting of that hell aflame in crowded cities, not one in one hundred of whose victims had any personal responsibility for the war. One way or the other the white race must answer for that act as far down the future as the keenest eyes can see.

Few Churches in history suffered more for the faith than the Confessing Church in Germany. One of the chief sufferers, as everyone knows, was Dr. Martin Niemöller. In an address in Seattle he solemnly identified himself with the German people and said, "Even though I am looked upon as a victim of National

Socialism, the fact remains that I can't cease being a member of my German nation, and that I signed the Stuttgart declaration, thereby affirming my personal share in the joint liability of my nation just now in its present state of guilt and contempt." He had opposed his nation's policy; nevertheless he felt their guilt as something he could not disown. Dr. Stewart Herman, an American Lutheran minister, who had been in charge of the American Church in Berlin from 1936 to 1942 has written in the *British Weekly* the description of the first meeting of the Fraternal Council of the Confessing Church, held a month after the British and Americans entered into Berlin. He called them a gaunt and haggard brotherhood with shrunken frames and sunken cheeks, with eyes doubly haunted by the memory of brethren murdered by the Gestapo and the vision of a Cross which would not let them go. This is what they said:

Long before God spoke in His wrath we were deaf to His word of love. Long before our churches were razed to rubble our pulpits had been desecrated and our prayers had grown dumb. Shepherds neglected their flocks, and congregations abandoned their pastors . . . But in the midst of the errors of the Church and the nation God gave power to some men and women of all confessions, classes and parties to oppose injustice and tyranny, to suffer and die. Now for the first time members of the Confessing Church are able to assume positions of leadership in the whole Church. Our captivity is over. . . .

What did they mean? They were acknowledging the guilt of those ministers of theirs who had bowed the

knee to the German Baal and had polluted their pulpits with Nazi doctrine. Although they themselves had opposed the Nazi iniquity through the years, they had not condemned it strongly enough. Now a thousand young ministers who had been trained in secret Seminaries and outlawed by the Nazis are being given recognition and opportunity. All ministers who had substituted Nazi teachings for the Gospel of Christ are being purged out of their ranks. Before the world they stand as their people's conscience repudiating their nation's error and transgression and pointing out the way of life. Vicarious sufferers all, and the one hope of the deliverance of their nation from the evil of their past.

I have often found people in Canada who oppose evils established in their community and yet feel a measure of personal responsibility for them because they are tolerated in the community to which they belong. We may not state our ideas of human solidarity of evil in Paul's terms, but the facts of the times force it upon us. In a comment on a Social Service congress in 1913, an Ottawa paper quoted the following:

When shall we learn by common joy,
Broad as the sun,
By common danger, common fear,
All common life that holds us near,
And this great, bitter, common pain
Coming again and yet again
That we are one.
Yes, one; we cannot sin apart,
Suffer alone,
Nor keep our goodness to ourselves
As hidden stores on secret shelves;

Because we each live not his best
Someone must suffer for the rest,
For we are one.

If man is one in sin and in the miseries it brings, it follows that it is through that same capacity for unity that Christ brings redemption. I have quoted the phrases which stress our solidarity in sin and death, but listen now to these promises of life which go with them: "As one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience, many will be made righteous."¹ These verses just sum up the entire passage.

One cannot read the story of Christ's temptations with sympathetic insight into the personal conflict they describe without seeing that He identified Himself with us in our low estate. Paul describes His self-emptying stage by stage: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."² The account we have of Jesus' temptations must be autobiographical and it reveals His object in all this, to stand with us in all our temptations and ills, to make our problem His own, to bring into human conflict all His resources as the Son of God and to work through with us our salvation from them all. Jesus treated as a temptation of the devil every suggestion that He aspire to positions in which He would be

¹ Romans 5:18-19.

² Philippians 2:7-8.

separated from His people. He did this because He recognized that help from without, *i.e.*, power exercised on our behalf by One who had no part in the ills which he sought to remedy, would do nothing to change the people themselves, and would, therefore, leave them in the same condition as before, and so He entered life as we did and fought through its issues on our level and on our behalf. Jesus carries us with Him in His battles and victories; the help He brings is always from within and calls our spirits into alliance with His spirit; He inspires us to act with Him or there is nothing He can do on our behalf. It is because His participation with us in our struggles must carry with it our participation with Him in the realization of His aims for men that the world fails to recognize the fact of the divine intervention. Yet those who have conquered temptation and risen above suffering by His aid know that God is with us of a truth.

There is no better example of what this means than we find in that amazing fragment of self-revelation in Philippians 3:8-11. As a Jew the desire for a righteousness that would stand God's scrutiny had become a craze with young Saul of Tarsus, and he strove for it with all his might. When he had to recognize his moral failure and moral impotence and after Christ had entered his soul, he describes the way he threw them all aside thus:

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my

own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Whatever attitude the believer may take toward Christ is based on the previous attitude which Christ has taken toward him, or on the relationship which Christ has established with sinful humanity. Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy puts it this way in his comment on the passage we have just quoted: "In dying on the Cross Christ identified Himself with the sin of the world, acknowledging that God's judgment upon sin was righteous and true, as the Head of mankind representing sinners and bearing the burden of their transgression. So, in the apostle's view, they that are Christ's have the firm assurance that in Him, the Crucified, they have made full confession of their sin to the holy and gracious God. They know, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that God accepts that confession and forgives them freely and joyfully."¹ "Forgiveness with the Forgiver in it"—forgiveness leading to unity with the one against whom we sinned.

Our response to this is consent to be included in what Christ has done for the world and offers to all. Faith in Christ as our Redeemer means entering of our own free choice into the union He has made possible. By it the believer shares all that his Lord possesses, and Christ's relations with the Father become his.

¹ "Commentary on Philippians." *Expositor's Greek Testament*. Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd.

"The central fact of Paul's religious life and thought is the complete identification of the believer with Christ." "The organic connection between Christ and the Christian is the regulating idea for the apostle." So in the apostle's view the new life depends on Christ's resurrection. His promise is, "Because I live ye shall live also."

Put that solidarity with Christ in salvation over against our solidarity with the world in sin. Here is the divine deliverance from our lost estate, as our fathers used to call it, set forth gloriously before all who will avail themselves of it.

But it does not end there. Our unity with Christ links us with one another. Paul always has in view the divine commonwealth to which Christ's people belong. "Moved and governed by the same spirit they are one at the deepest levels of life. The new life in Christ, while it rests upon a most intensely individual experience, is yet a life in which no man is a mere individual. He is a member of Christ's body." It was the surprise of early Christianity that people from all races and classes could enter through Christ into this divine organism; it is a surprise still when we see the process in action. "Wherever Christ's spirit is at work, there is His body; and He has only one body."

This is what actually happened to the early Christians. The fact of Christ and His dealing with them became more important to each than any other fact of his experience. The separate interests of master and slave, man and woman, Jew and Gentile, man of culture and barbarian, faded into nothing before the absorbing fact which made each of these a Christian.

Christ lived in each, and, therefore, the life of all was one. . . . Here then, as Paul saw with the sudden clearness of vision, was in actual being that holy commonwealth of God for which the ages waited. . . . The free, joyous experience of the sons of God had created a family of God, inseparably one in Him: "one person in Christ Jesus."

We see in this the sin of our divisions, which separate even at the Lord's Table, believers who are one in Christ.

We see, also, the supreme value of the communion we have, for example, in our congregation. Those of us who worship here together, belong together because we belong to Christ. He is the centre of everything. The Church has been called "The Divine Society" because He is its centre, and the "Beloved Community" because love is the link of the perfect life." We may think that all this is ideal because we are so human and, therefore, so defective in character and service, but in life's supreme crises we shall see in the light which breaks through the veil that this is what we really are. As Paul puts it in Philippians 3:20-21: "We are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body that belongs to our low estate till it resembles the body of His glory, by the same power that enables Him to make everything subject to Himself."

There is a sense in which we still belong to the world. In so many ways believers and unbelievers share a common life, bear common obligations, and participate in common advantages. Are we free to worship here according to our conscience? The state

has recognized that right and guarantees it to us with its laws and powers. Are we free to rebuke the state when we believe its policy is wrong and to call all its citizens to a righteousness which they have failed to recognize? Our system of self-government allows that also to the Christian. Some sects forbid their members to vote or to take part in the activities of the common life. They owe their freedom to advocate their exclusive type of piety to the state which they despise, and they are such paupers in spirit that they are willing to accept the advantages which the organization of society secures to them without meeting their share of the cost. The call to us is to a recognition of what we owe all classes of our community more frank and full than ever. Further, the spiritual can see possibilities in human attainment and achievement to which the unspiritual are blind; it is our duty to the God who made all and loves all to awaken and inspire them toward their realization. Our functions as members of Christ's body reach out into our life in the world, and He moves us first to draw men of the world into union with Himself, and, second, to go out into the world to serve all those for whom His life was given. From every point of view, the peoples of the world are one. There is more to be gained by every nation by recognizing this unity and working together than can ever be gained thro' strife and division. But, some say, does not the Church separate herself from the world? Not in that sense. The Church of Christ is never a closed-off group barring outsiders from her fellowship; the Church is open to all who will enter. She maintains her communion to develop her life in God, and from her fellowship to send forth renewed

men, plus Christ, to offer the world all it will receive and to do for it all the good it will accept at her hands. The church lives by reconciliation and for reconciliation; the faith which removes the bars between her people and God also removes the bars between man and man. We are linked with Him in bringing the severed members of His body together, and in that unity is fulness of life for ourselves.

XIV

THE LIFE UNENDING

I CORINTHIANS 15

I CAN never forget the impression made on my mind by what Robert Ingersoll said at the graveside of a friend. His mockery of all forms of the Christian faith has never been outdone in the history of infidelity and yet in the presence of the grim fact of death, he could not accept it as final. He could not but give voice to a hope, vague, perhaps vain, but still a hope that somehow, somewhere, the qualities of his friend would prove imperishable and that he might see them in personal form again.

Similarly Shelley fairly spat out his hatred of the forms and creeds of Christianity, yet he could not escape its ideas. So in his *Prometheus Unbound* he depicted a god suffering for men and in the end victorious through suffering. Then under the shock of John Keats' early death he wrote in *Adonais*, his matchless Elegy:

He is not dead; he doth not sleep
He hath awakened from the dream of life
He is part of the loveliness which once he made more lovely
The soul of Adonais like a star
Beacons from the abode where the eternal are.

Over against these random guesses I want to place today the burning confidence of one who had seen with

his own eyes the Risen Christ and had been transformed by the sight.

I am including I Corinthians 15 among the hymns of the Christian life. It is more than a hymn and yet it is among the greatest of songs of praise. It begins with certain statements of fact; it continues with an argument on the basis of those facts; and it culminates in a paean of triumph over sin, and over death, sin's hateful progeny. "St. Paul's central doctrine was the union of men through faith with the living Christ, who is 'The quickening spirit.'" Our union with Him goes right through from the first act of faith to our eternal destiny. Christ's resurrection is the symbol and guarantee of ours. All that death did on Calvary was undone on Easter morning and far, far more. All that death has done or ever will do with Christ's brethren shall be undone, and far, far more. All this is involved in our union with Christ now and in the conquest of sin which it brings.

For Paul the Christian Hope is founded on historic fact. It is a fact that at a certain point in history God entered human life in the person of His Son. It is a fact that as a man and for men the Son of God died and rose again. No one questioned the fact of His death; Paul gives the evidence for the fact of His resurrection. He names certain people who met the Risen Lord, including himself; he tells of large groups of people to whom Christ came in bodily form after He had risen from the dead, most of whom were still alive. There was no possibility of mistake; besides, the effects of His resurrection were the salvation of individuals, the birth of the Church, and a new factor in the human conflict.

This is the earliest account we have of the resurrection of Jesus. This epistle was written not later than 55 A.D. or within twenty-seven years of the event it records. The writer reminds his readers that he had told them this story four years before, and that they may still verify his statements for themselves by consulting others who met the Risen Lord. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the best authenticated fact of ancient history.

The next group of facts on which Paul builds his faith is the spiritual experiences of these believers. They had felt in their own lives Christ's power to save. It was a matter of fact that they were not in their sins, and that it was Christ who had delivered them. One cannot read this epistle without seeing that a moral change of heroic dimensions had been wrought in these Corinthian converts, and that they had been lifted out of depravity into the purity and joy and power of the life in Christ. Now, Paul argues, "if, as was actually the case, they had found their present need entirely satisfied, they would find their future need satisfied also. If they had found in Christ a Saviour from sin, they would find in Him a Saviour from death, all the more certainly so, since sin and death are really inseparable." As Christ Himself showed, for example, in John 6:54 and John 5:24-29, "Union with Him brings not only salvation now, but resurrection finally."

Paul will not recognize speculation or theory as the basis of faith. It may be very clever and have a great deal to say for itself, but it is only a "cunningly devised fable" compared with the solid foundation of fact on which our hope for the future rests.

Paul then argues from the resurrection of Christ to the resurrection of those who sleep in Him. The two solid facts of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ have been called "the pillars of our creed, the warp and woof of the Gospel." Now Christ died for our sins. He identified Himself with us in our fallen estate, and as one with us "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." It follows, therefore, that He rose, not merely as an individual, but as our representative, and that His victory over death, as over sin, was won for all the race. (Vs. 12-23)

It is necessary to keep in mind that the issue between Paul and those Christian thinkers was not immortality but resurrection. The Greeks believed in immortality; in the *Phaedo* Plato argues powerfully for the immortality of the soul. But many of them believed that the material was inherently evil; the body was a drag on the soul, and man's destiny was to be delivered from it. Paul cannot conceive of a bodiless immortality; the spirit must have a medium for self-expression through which to work its will. The hope of the man in Christ is to become what Christ is. As John puts it: "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him."¹ Christ was raised from the dead in the completeness of His manhood, not less a man than "in the days of His flesh," but more. Since He rose, we too shall rise.

When these Corinthians argued that the resurrection of dead men was impossible, Paul answered that Christ had died as a man and that, therefore, His resurrection proved its possibility. Not only so, but

¹ I John 3:2.

His resurrection was a necessary proof that His sacrifice of Himself had been accepted and was effective for our salvation. In Romans 4:25 Paul affirmed that Jesus was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." If He did not rise, we have no basis of fact for our hope of life eternal. His triumph over death showed the world that He had succeeded and that men were free.

Our resurrection depends on our union with Him. This is a truth frequently emphasized in the New Testament. For example: "If the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through His spirit which dwells in you."¹ "We await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power which enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."² "This is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."³ If the living Christ is to triumph gloriously in us at the last day, it is necessary that He triumph gloriously in our nature here and now.

A pertinent question at this point is, Is the Christ-life in us vigorous enough to warrant the expectation of its survival in the form here described? Life is the gift of God; it is the Creator who by His power will raise us from the dead as He raised His Son⁴; but has He that place in our nature that makes us so com-

¹ Romans 8:11.

² Philippians 3:20.

³ John 6:40.

⁴ Acts 2:24.

pletely His that He cannot let us go? It has been said that the final clause was added to the Apostles' Creed after Cyprian's triumph in death. When persecution broke out, he, as Bishop, exhorted the Presbyters, Deacons, and the whole Christian community to confess their faith when brought to trial before the authorities. He wrote in his last letter that "when a man is apprehended and delivered up, then he ought to speak, inasmuch as God dwelling in us speaks in that hour." He had learned that he himself was to be brought to trial as a Christian leader, and refused to avoid arrest. He wrote, "It is fitting for a Bishop to confess his Lord in the city in which he presides over the Lord's Church, that so his whole people may be glorified by the Bishop's confession in their presence. For a Bishop, who is called to confess his faith, speaks in that moment under a divine afflatus, and as the mouthpiece of all." He made the confession; because of it he was sentenced to death by the sword. He received the sentence with the words, "Thanks be to God." Then the Church added to the Creed, the words, "And the life everlasting." In other words, They cannot kill Cyprian; a spirit like his is derived from God and lives with the life of God.

Centuries before Cyprian, the Maccabaeen martyrs awakened the faithful to the same belief in immortality. Never did a more terrible persecution descend on believing souls than then, and the heroic loyalty which God's servants displayed in the fire, led the survivors to affirm, "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." It is the quality of our religion, the completeness of

God's possession of the soul that assures us of immortality, the life in God here issuing by His grace into a life with Him hereafter.

The wider aspects of Christ's victory are then brought before us. (Vs. 24-28) The great change is wrought from within; by man came sin and by man came also resurrection. But the victory of Christ does not stop with our resurrection; it will go on until everything in all creation is brought into subjection to Him. God is active in this; it is by His power that His Son will subdue all things to the Father's sovereign will. The destruction of death itself will be the final stage in His victory. Then the Son, Himself, will hand back His dominion to the Father that God may be all in all. On this climax of the argument Professor McFadyen comments, "The argument here reaches an impassioned climax. Strict logic is left behind, and Paul is swept impetuously along by his exalted emotion, as he contemplates the risen Christ victorious over every foe, consummating the great process of redemption by the restoration of His people from death, and then Himself bowing in voluntary submission before the great God and Father, that He may be all in all. It is a most majestic conception of history, upon which one instinctively pauses before the resumption of the more formal argument."¹

But look at the bearing of this on movements in our world now. Many of them are in direct opposition to all that Christ stands for. The materialistic interpretation of history, authority seized by violence,

¹ J. E. McFadyen, "Commentary on I Corinthians." *Expositor's Greek Testament*. Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd.

forms of government which deny the individual his rights and social systems which deny him opportunity for the full development of his powers, attractions and influences which debase and destroy are contrary to Christ's truth and will, and frustrate His plans for His people. Eventually they cannot but disappear; God's outworking of His designs will overthrow them and all identified with them. This is the "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

What is the nature of the resurrection body? Paul says that only a fool would raise this question; nevertheless he deals with it. He has before his mind living antagonists arguing heatedly for their views of human destiny. In the earlier part of the chapter he dealt with the Greek theory that the immortal would be disembodied spirits in the age to come; here he attacks the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the former holding that resurrection will mean the restoration of the body that now is, and the latter that the whole idea of resurrection is absurd.

The Western mind tries to establish its positions by argument; the Eastern sets forth its beliefs by illustration, and if he can find a parallel in nature to the spiritual truth he advocates he feels that he has made his case. Paul is here the Oriental, and the illustration he uses is the seed. Now "for the seed to be sown is to be born, not to be buried" and so it is with our bodies and the life to come.

You seem to imagine, he says, that, in preaching the resurrection, I am presenting an idea foreign to all earthly analogy; on the contrary, this principle of death as the way to new life prevails everywhere. When

the seed is sown, its vital energy, which has been dormant, springs into action. The life which was in the seed passes into the plant, and takes form first in the sprout, then in the blade, and then in the ear; then it re-embodies itself in "the full corn in the ear." It cast off only the old form or shell; the new forms which it assumes are akin to that which perished, but renewed, expanded, and with a new career ahead.

So it will be the death and resurrection of the body. It is the life within which gives it form and energy. My body is the same body as it was when you welcomed me here thirty-three years ago, but the substance of which it is composed has changed four or five times since then. The vital spark, the life principle, the spirit has kept it the same through all these changes. The same spirit, quickened by the Spirit of God and united with Him, will not go out of existence when the physical organism breaks down; it will re-clothe itself in a spiritual body which will express its new nature and through which it will fulfill its functions.

Resurrection is not resuscitation. This body of flesh is not to be restored, as the Pharisees taught and the Sadducees denied. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," Paul declared, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." This idea that the resurrection must mean the restoration of the conditions and relationships of this present order, Jesus refuted when the Sadducees tackled Him on the question of the much-married woman and her marital connections in the age to come. He said, "When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven." This idea

that a future life must mean a recovery of all that we had in this life is old as humanity. Ancient tombs are being found containing supplies for the dead, so that, when they awake, they will be able to subsist as before; the Indians had their Happy Hunting Grounds and the Norsemen their Valhalla where the valiant might continue their favourite pastimes and pursuits under ideal conditions, all failing to realize the completeness of the change death will bring and all falling below the inspired conception in Paul's quotation:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him."

In the spiritual realm as in the natural, like produces like. You do not sow oats and reap barley. Or, to vary the illustration, and ask with Jesus, "Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles?" If anything persists through death, it must be character; it is only that which cannot die and which God cannot afford to let die, which will survive. As Dr. Marcus Dods put it, "It is only what is truly spiritual in ourselves that can put us in possession of a spiritual body. From Christ we can receive what is spiritual; and if our belief in Him prompts us to become like Him, then we may count upon sharing His destiny."¹

Immortality, according to Paul's illustration, involves individuality, does it not? If the new life of Christ, developed and cultivated here, is to carry its gains with it, memory is a necessity and with memory, continuity unbroken between the life in Christ here

¹ *Expositor's Greek Testament.*

and hereafter. Surely identity necessitates identification. You remember the old question, "Shall we know our friends in heaven?" A deeper issue is this life as a preparation for the eternal, and our knowledge of the person in the process of preparation surely implies recognition when the preparation is complete.

This also is involved in our illustration of the seed. Life itself is an abstract term. We do not see life in the world around us; we see living things. Every blade of grass, each tiny insect, and every majestic tree is a life in its own right, with its own organism and its own energies and functions. To speak of our souls being lost in the sea of being, as some mystics have done, is to assume their annihilation; to live at all is to live as individuals. Just as the identity of the man is preserved and may be recognized through all the changes from infancy to age, so the distinctiveness of personality is taught by every figure used in this glorious conception of the life to come. Yet this life is not to be independent or sufficient unto itself; we are to live in vital union with the Life-Giver.

It is the assurance that the resurrection body will be like Christ's that fires Paul's imagination. In the background of his thinking is the body in which the Risen Lord appeared to His followers. It was a body; for Jesus to have appeared to His followers as a disembodied spirit would never have given them the sense of victory nor sent them forth as the heralds of victory as His resurrection actually did. His body bore the scars of His conflict, but it had none of the limitations of our physical organism. It was a perfect organ of the spirit, free from the restrictions of time and space,

perfect in its mastery of the material things around Him. The miracle of the creation of the Church arises out of the miracle of Christ's resurrection. Paul does not mention Christ's resurrection body, but his exposition of the meaning of resurrection for us confirms the stories of the Risen Lord's appearance in the Gospels.

Here is his illustration. As the flesh of man differs from the flesh of beasts, birds and fishes, so the spiritual body of the future will differ from this material body. It will have a glory of its own as the sun, moon and stars have each a glory of their own. The word "glory" covers the two ideas of honour and splendour, and the body that is to be will have attributes which will shine before God with a glory that excels. What is sown is perishable; what grows out of it will be imperishable; what is sown bears the marks of defeat and decay; what grows out of it will be acclaimed as sharing Christ's immortality: what is sown is beset with weakness and exposed to disease; what grows out of it will have the vigour of eternal youth: what is sown has the defects of nature, but the harvest will share the spiritual perfection of the Son of God.

The change will be great beyond our powers of comprehension. "Death has conquered us; Christ has conquered the conqueror." Where he formerly reigned, death now serves, and his doom is sealed. Now the brightest human qualities fade and fail before our eyes. A young business man said about his aging father, "We no longer get the sound judgment on business problems that we used to get from him." The years which weighed heavily on the body had begun to weaken the mind. I see an old woman moving along the street

with hesitating step because even a slip would be fatal, and I recall that only yesterday she danced and skipped along in an ecstasy of vital energy, as radiant in her girlhood as a ray of sunshine. Christ will reverse that process; progress will be upward instead of downward; there will be growth and energy as far beyond our imaginings as the power of Christ, "the quickening spirit," is beyond our present capabilities. It all comes through our union with Christ, who "conquered death and brings life and immortality to light."

This includes the persons whose powers you saw fade and fail, whose spirit, unchangeable in its quality, was gradually deprived of the energies and abilities it once had to work its will. The Christ who made them what they were will restore, and more than restore, all that they committed to Him against that day.

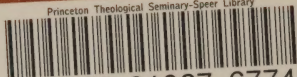
We have gone round the circle. We started this series with the truth of Christ's indwelling, as revealed in the Scriptures and experienced in our time. We have traced it out to its consequences in Christian living and service and brought it to its culmination in the life unending. Here we rest with the Master's own assurance: "I am the Resurrection and the life; he that believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

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